MOLLY'S BABY

A LITTLE HEROINE OF THE SEA

C. A. STEPHENS

Property of
Valleyford History
Club

Mrs. Faye Baker
from
E. R. Doughty

MOLLY'S BABY

A LITTLE HEROINE OF THE SEAS

Molly's Baby

A Little Heroine of the Seas

BY

C. A. STEPHENS

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DEDICATED

WITH CORDIAL BEST

WISHES TO THE MANY

Readers of the Youth's Companion

WHO HAVE SO KINDLY REMEMBERED

US AT THE OLD SQUIRE'S

FARM

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Molly's Baby

A Little Heroine of the Seas

PART FIRST

UNCLE DRESSER'S MONEY

CHAPTER I

IT was planting-time, and joyously sang the robins in the great balm of Gileads in front of the old farmhouse that morning—the morning of May 2, 1868. Spring, so frequently tardy in Maine, had come with a rush that year. In a single week the last hard snow-drifts of winter vanished, the birds returned to us, the ice broke up on the lake, and cherry and pear-plum burst forth in white blossom.

On these spring mornings we had breakfast at six, and work for the day was then talked over, the old squire giving us boys a word of advice as to seed potatoes and the proper distance for planting corn rows when pumpkin seeds were put in the hills.

The old farm was a little kingdom by itself, and the breakfast-table a kind of open court for free discussion of our manifold labors. Sometimes there were grumblings, and complaints which had to be adjusted. But quite as often breakfast ended in a gale of laughter, for we were light-hearted children. That morning opened gaily enough.

The day before we had observed that certain vegetables in the cellar had been gnawed, and at supper grandmother remarked that the rats were bothering her again.

"Addison," said she to my older cousin, "you must set the trap down there."

That morning Addison found that he had captured remarkable game. No one else was yet astir indoors, and he carried his catch out behind the wagon-house. At breakfast he spoke of it. "I caught that rat last night, grandmother," he said.

"You did?" she cried. "I'm glad of that."

"I thought I heard a noise down cellar in the night," said the old squire.

"Was it a large one?" asked Ellen.

"Yes," said Addison, "it was; no mistake. When I went to rap him on the head he bit my stick savagely. He had teeth more than half an inch long."

The old squire looked at Addison curiously,—for he was not a boy who often exaggerated facts,—but merely remarked that those were long teeth for a rat.

"Well, it was a big rat, sir," replied Addison. "He was so large that I had the curiosity to take the steelyards and weigh him."

"How much did he weigh?"

"Five pounds and two ounces," said Addison, slowly and impressively.

There was a general exclamation of astonishment, and the old squire cried, "Sir!" in tones at once incredulous and reproving.

"Now, Addison, what are you talking about?" said grandmother.

"Why, about a rat," replied Addison, stoutly.

"Ah, but you must have weighed him wrong," observed the old squire. "No rat on these premises ever weighed five pounds, or a quarter of that!"

"On the contrary, sir," replied Addison, with an air of pride, "I weighed him twice, and I am sure

that I weighed him correctly. I would make oath, if necessary, that he weighs just what I state."

The old squire pushed back his chair with a loud squeak on the kitchen floor, and rose from the table.

"You come out and show me that rat, sir!" he exclaimed, and he marched out through the woodhouse with an air of determination to know the full truth, now and at once. Addison followed him; much interested, the rest of us crowded after them.

In the wagon-house Addison opened the back door, and reaching down beside the high step there, lifted up by its long, black, smooth tail an animal with coarse reddish hair, as large as a large cat.

It was a great muskrat!

A *rat,* indeed!

At that time I did not know myself what sort of creature it was; but a shout of laughter from Halstead let me into the joke. The girls, too, were laughing, and grandmother made a sudden dash at Addison; but he leaped nimbly out at the back door. Grandmother stood and laughed until she was quite weak. As for the squire, he had given vent to a single snort of discomfiture, and started to walk away —to "save his face," as we used to say.

We were in the midst of this merriment when we heard wheels in the yard, and saw a stranger driving in. He held up a yellow envelope.

"A dollar fifty to collect," said he.

"It is a telegraph message," said grandmother, faintly, and sat down in sudden agitation.

The terrible memories of the Civil War, when the telegraph so constantly brought the news of fatalities on the battle-field, were fresh in her mind.

The old squire went out for the message. "It is for you, Ruth," he said to grandmother, and Theodora brought it to her.

"Open it, child, and read it." And Theodora opened and slowly read:

"Africa Dresser died yesterday. Funeral Thursday at two o'clock"; and the signature was "Relatives."

The old squire said nothing. Grandmother also sat pensively without speaking. The rest of us were wondering as to the name, which we had never heard before—"Africa."

"Was she one of our relatives, grandmother?" Theodora asked.

"It was my half-sister Abigail's husband," grandmother replied, absently. It seemed very strange that a man should have been named Africa!

During the forenoon other new vistas of the family history were opened. The question of attending the funeral had arisen; and at the dinner-table it was apparent that the old squire did not wish to go.

"It is eighty miles," he said. "It would be a long, hard drive for you to take, Ruth. Besides," he continued, "the journey would use up five days and more, and our farm-work is pressing us hard."

"I know it, Joseph. I know it," grandmother admitted, sadly. "Still, it is my sister Abigail's husband," she added. "I do feel that we ought to go—some of us."

The old squire winced visibly. There was silence for some moments; and then the truer reason for his reluctance came out.

"You know, Ruth, how those brothers of Africa have gone on about the property there, and what they have done, and the accusations they have made. Ruth, I dislike to go near them and I dislike to have you go, or get mixed up in it again. I don't blame you for wanting to go to Uncle Dresser's funeral; but Aunt Abigail's been dead a good many years. Hadn't we better send our regrets and keep away? Wouldn't it be better all round?

"And there's that Molly, too," the old squire added. "I never knew what to say or think about that!

There's nothing we could do to better things. Like as not Calvin and 'Rastus would take it all wrong, if we went."

Grandmother sat back and wiped her eyes silently, seeing which the old squire soon rose and went out to the field again. He hardly spoke as we worked, and during the afternoon went to the house alone, to have, as we conjectured, another talk with grandmother about going to the funeral.

Later, at the supper-table, we found that they had agreed on a compromise. Grandmother had consented not to go herself; but not wholly to neglect common usages among relatives, they had decided to have Addison and Theodora go early the following morning.

As this would mean four or five days' respite from work on the farm, Halstead and I deemed it a great privilege, and were on the point of grumbling. To our surprise, Addison did not wish to go. "My scions have come," said he. "I must graft those summer-sweets to-morrow."

"Why, you can put the scions in the cellar for a few days," the old squire said to him.

But for some reason Addison was averse to going. He made other excuses, until at last, unwillingly, the old people consented that I should go in his place, although there were doubts as to my entire ability to drive or find the way. In fact, grandmother begged Addison to go; but he remained strangely obdurate. So they started my cousin and me at five the next morning, dressed in our best dark clothes, with old Sol hitched in the driving wagon and a bushel of oats under the seat.

It is a proud moment of a boy's life when a horse is first given under his hand. The old squire told me about how fast to drive, when to use the whip and when not, and how to feed and water morning, noon and night. It was plain that both he and grand-

mother lacked full confidence in me, but I had enough in myself to make up.

To Theodora, as being older and wiser, was entrusted a small map of Maine, clipped from an old geography book, with the route traced from town to town in pencil. I was driver, but she was sailing-master, so to speak.

We were instructed to reach Lovewell's Tavern in Waterville that night, a hostelry which the old squire knew well. By telling Mr. Lovewell who we were and where we were going, we would be sure of good entertainment. For our luncheon we had a box of food.

The envious Halstead jeered me as I took the reins, and Addison had turned away, smiling; but grandmother followed beside the wagon as I drove down the lane.

"When you get to Uncle Dresser's," said she, principally to Theodora, and in a low tone, "you must not mind if things there are not just as we have them at home here. Try not to notice anything that happens; and, Dora, dear, try to be nice to Molly Totherly —if she does seem a little queer."

The idea of grandmother asking Theodora to be nice to any one seemed very odd to me, for she was always a sweet-tempered girl. In fact, grandmother appeared much disturbed about many things that morning.

And now began a journey which then seemed to me of vast duration, filled with immense personal responsibility. We sought to remember every turn and fork of our road, so as to be able to find our way back. Theodora constantly consulted the map; and we inquired as to the way of nearly every one whom we met.

I locked wheels with a wagon driven by a woman who was not inclined to turn out; but as both horses were walking, no harm was done. I took occasion

to inform her that I required my half of the road. We also clicked hubs with a boy who had a basket of pigs, and was, perhaps, driving for the first time himself.

"If I had a girl with me, like you have, to hold my reins," said he, "I would stop and lick ye."

"Hitch your horse! I'll wait for you!" I shouted after him.

Theodora attempted gently to make me understand that such asperities were bad road manners; but I was all for insisting on my half of the road.

The May day was fine, and warm, with all the tree buds bursting into leaf, and a faint odor of liverwort stealing from the woodlands beside the road; and how busy were all the sparrows, robins and thrushes, looking out places for nesting! Dora never tired of watching them.

At about eleven that forenoon we came to the bridge over the Androscoggin River at Livermore; and an hour later we had our lunch and fed old Sol by the shore of a great pond which the road skirted.

Throughout the afternoon we drove on, arriving at Lovewell's Tavern in Waterville, on the Kennebec River, at about seven o'clock.

Well do I recall how badly my arms ached from the unusual exercise of holding the reins all day. Theodora had offered to drive, but I would not hear to that; and she was not one of those who bother a young driver with constant advice.

Often that day we had speculated as to our stranger relatives to whom we were journeying, particularly as to Molly Totherly. Something in the old squire's tone and words when he spoke of her had filled us with a vague curiosity. During the two years we had been at the Maine homestead these relatives had never before been mentioned.

At the tavern the next morning we were unable to

get breakfast until eight; but Theodora and I were out at six, and went along Main Street to see the college buildings, Waterville being the seat of what was then termed Colby University.

From Waterville we had eighteen miles to drive, up past the village of Skowhegan. I am a little reluctant to name the beautiful town adjoining, where our relatives lived, from a fear that my story may not prove a credit to the place. It is as well, perhaps, to let it go without further identification.

A few miles out of Waterville we were misdirected as to our road for the first time; and before we got back to our proper route and reached the "old Dresser place," the relatives and neighbors had collected for the funeral service.

The house was a large old two-story building, painted red, with an ell fully a hundred and fifty feet in length, which connected it to a stable and barns. The place had formerly been a tavern. As many as twenty horses were hitched about; but the people were now all inside.

"We had better go in as soon as we can," Theodora said. So we hitched Sol to a fence-post, and then going to the house door, entered, feeling very strange indeed among all those sitting, silent people, who regarded us curiously.

A man who seemed to be in charge of the funeral came to us, and when Theodora told him who we were, he said, "Then you belong with the mourners," and took us through two rooms to the parlor, where fourteen or fifteen persons, all strangers to us, were grouped about the coffin. Among them were three boys of about my own age and a girl rather older and much larger than Theodora, who sat apart from the others.

I wondered at once if she was Molly Totherly. She had most abundant, beautiful red hair, and the largest mouth I ever saw.

That was as much as I noticed at first sight, for my attention was at once directed to one of the boys, who was staring evilly, and when I looked, made a small but venomous face at me. In all my life I never conceived so sudden a hatred of any one as of that black-haired boy, relative though he were.

At the head of the coffin sat three lean, gray old men in ill-fitting black coats. They, too, looked very hard and forbiddingly at Theodora and me—so much so that I saw my cousin's sensitive face change and grow quite pale, for the funeral, and everything in the room, affected her profoundly.

The minister who preached the funeral sermon had begun to speak already, standing in the door of the room. But in what seemed to me a rather hardy manner, careless of propriety, the large girl moved her chair over to where Theodora and I sat. Motioning me to make room, she placed it between us, and sitting down there at once, took my cousin's hand in her own.

I remember noticing with a passing surprise what a strong-looking girl she was, what freckles she had, and also her great, odd, light-hazel eyes, or else it was her eyebrows which looked so odd; they were very thick and pale yellow.

When she moved her chair to sit between us there was another stir on the floor beyond where the coffin stood, and a huge old black and white Newfoundland dog, getting up slowly, came round, and with a glance into the large girl's face, lay down in front of us. Somehow I felt less ill at ease after this, and I could see that Theodora did, although the black-haired boy made another face at me.

Owing perhaps to this disagreeable boy, the big dog, or the large girl, I remember nothing of the sermon except the text: "Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep." Once or twice a lugubrious wail of singing rose and fell in an adjoin-

ing room; and then the people filed in for a last look at the dead face of their old neighbor.

Theodora shrank from this, and held me by the hand beside her; for by this time the large girl and the dog had gone out.

As Sol was tired from our long journey, and had not yet been fed, we did not go in the procession to the graveyard, which was three or four miles distant; but when the others had departed, busied ourselves putting our horse up at the barn.

Then having had nothing to eat ourselves since morning, we took our box of food from the wagon, and going far out into an orchard back of the house, made a joyless supper there. My cousin confided to me that she could never partake of a mouthful of food in that house where the funeral had been; and I felt much the same myself.

We wandered about the orchard for an hour or more, until a woman, one of the neighbors who was assisting at the funeral, came out, invited us into the house, and showed us to rooms up-stairs, where, she said, we could sleep that night.

The woman was talking all the while, and told us that "Grandsir Dresser," as she called him, was sixty-nine years old; and that his granddaughter, Molly, had taken almost the entire care of him for the last three years. "And I do just hope Molly'll get the property!" the woman added, with a sudden flash in her eyes which at the time seemed strange to us.

She went on to inform us that Molly's mother had been dead nine or ten years. "She was Grandsir Dresser's only daughter," said she. "But he's got three brothers, more's the pity!"

"Is Molly's father living?" Theodora asked.

The woman did not seem to hear the question at first, but replied at last that she believed he was killed in the war. "I do hope the old man's left a will, and a good strong will!" the woman ran on, as if from

a pent-up desire to express her feelings to some one. "But he probably didn't."

The old red house, which seemed to us very large and cheerless, was now for the time quite deserted; but ere long the relatives and others returned from the grave in a body, to the number of twenty-five or thirty, and appeared to be having a consultation.

Presently we heard first one, then another shout, "Molly!" "Molly Totherly!" "You, Molly Totherly!" But there was no response. We had not seen the red-haired girl since she left us in the parlor, or the old dog, either.

No one of them all had spoken a word to us or seemed to notice us, and by this time we were both about as homesick as we could be. I can never describe what a gloom the place, the funeral and all had cast upon us.

We drew off to the orchard again till dusk fell, then returned to the barn, where we looked after Sol's comfort, and then stole into the house.

The parlor and other rooms down-stairs were now lighted. The three brothers, with their wives and children, were having supper and talking together. They seemed to have taken possession of the house; yet we saw nothing of Molly.

After lingering about the door and in the hall a little, in the hope of again seeing the woman who had talked with us, we crept up the dark staircase to the rooms which she had shown us.

"I wish we had never come!" I exclaimed, fervently.

"Oh, so do I!" my cousin echoed faintly, then burst into tears. She was unaccustomed to such usage.

Ah, the gloom of those dark old rooms, and the sense of neglect and of enmity that oppressed us! It seemed to me that we never could endure the night. This, however, was but the beginning of what we were destined to experience before morning.

CHAPTER II

WHAT we saw and heard that night at the "old Dresser place" can only be described as a very bad side of human nature. It will be better to give the reader a hint in advance as to the cause—a hint of which my cousin and I did not have the benefit. The plain fact was, they were having no end of trouble there over Uncle Dresser's money.

The old lumberman possessed some little property, consisting of the homestead, timber lands, and, it was thought, considerable money. None of his immediate family was living at the time except this granddaughter, Molly Totherly. Molly's mother had been his only child. But he had three younger brothers, Erastus, Ethan and Calvin Dresser, who had families of their own, and who conceived themselves to be the heirs to their brother's estate.

None of them had ever aided him in any way. On the contrary, he had often felt obliged to help them. For several years they had rarely visited him, or evinced the slightest interest in his invalid condition, there being ill feeling on account of money which they had borrowed from him and did not like to repay.

On the other hand, Molly had lived at home and taken good care of him up to the time of his death. From the age of thirteen she had done this almost wholly alone and unassisted.

Uncle Dresser's neighbors were unanimously for Molly; and the things they said of those brothers would have made their ears burn if they had been ears of the sensitive kind. No one could learn that

Uncle Dresser had made a will; but Molly said that her grandfather had told her he was going to give her his property. On the day of the funeral, however, which Theodora and I had journeyed eighty miles to attend, the three brothers, Erastus, Ethan and Calvin, with their families, appeared at the homestead. They brought a lawyer with them, and virtually took possession, their plan being to ignore Molly Totherly altogether. And I now imagine that the reason none of them recognized us, or welcomed us even to the extent of a single word, was from suspicion that we were there to set up some sort of claim on the estate, on grandmother's side. Little wonder that the old squire wished to keep out of the trouble!

Would it ever be morning, so that we could harness old Sol and get away from there, was the thought uppermost in my mind as I stood at the window of that dark little chamber. There was a bed in the room; but I recollect resolving not to take off my clothes, but to be ready to start early; and I am confident that my cousin was even more homesick than myself.

Down-stairs we heard people going hurriedly about from room to room, as if moving furniture, opening and shutting doors. Their voices came up to us, sometimes low and earnest, then high-pitched, as if in anger. We also heard them calling, "Molly!" Presently the old dog barked wrathfully.

Theodora now came to my door and spoke. She, too, appeared to have no thought of going to bed. "Oh, what do you suppose it is?" she asked. "What are they doing?"

That was more than I could answer. We stood in the doorway and listened. A singular noise had begun below, as if a door or a desk were being pried open with a bar. We could hear the wood cracking, then a loud snap, as of a breaking bolt or lock. Presently there rose exclamations as of dissent or dis-

satisfaction. Yet it was not easy to distinguish what they said. Louder than the rest, however, we soon heard one voice exclaim:

"We'll find it if we have to tear the old house down!"

Then another lower voice said, "He didn't make a will."

"That's more than you know!" said the higher voice.

After this they seemed all to go to another room farther away, where we could for a time hear nothing, until suddenly heavy blows shook the whole house. Dora and I now had wild thoughts of stealing down-stairs and going to the barn, to harness old Sol and escape. The moon was shining brightly outside the windows. But, to be frank, we were afraid to go down.

Immediately, then, a number of persons—eight or ten, from the sound of their steps—came up-stairs, one gray, elderly man leading with a lamp. He looked first into Theodora's room, then into the one where we both stood near the window in the dark. Then he turned away, as if he had made a mistake.

We heard them go stumbling along the narrow hall into the ell chamber, and knock at a door out there.

"We know you are in here, Molly Totherly!" one of them at last said, angrily. "You had better open the door!"

A woman's voice replied from within; but we could not hear what she said.

"Oh, yes, we have a right to!" the man's voice in the hall exclaimed. "We've got the law on our side, and we are going to know what's in this room!" The voice within appeared to refuse to open the door.

"Well, then, we will break it down!" cried the man. "Yes, we do dare to!" he went on. "You'll soon find out. No matter what your grandpa said.

The law is on our side. Open this door! You won't? We'll see, then!

"Get an ax!" he said to some one of those with him in the hall; and one of them went tramping heavily down-stairs.

This so excited Theodora that she trembled violently. "It is Molly!" she whispered. "What will they do to her?" I was equally excited, and had mad thoughts of rushing forth to Molly's assistance, or to raise help.

The man came back with an ax, and again they ordered Molly to open the door. Apparently she still refused, for the next instant a frightful blow resounded through the house. Theodora clutched my arm in terror. Outside, in the yard below, the dog barked, and continued barking savagely as the ax-strokes were repeated.

The door, however, held. They struck it more than twenty times, and now it sounded as if they were chopping it down. We could hear the splinters and chips falling on the floor. By this time I was so beside myself with a frantic impulse to do something that I pushed up the window of the room where we stood, and got out on the piazza roof. I was about to shout for help. The sound of those blows inside a house at dead of night was maddening.

But at once on stepping forth I caught sight of something which arrested my attention and put a new idea in my head. Far along the side of the ell a window was open, and in the moonlight I saw what looked to be a rope dangling from it; and even as I looked, a woman began to get out at the window, and laying hold of the rope, swung herself down rapidly to the ground, where the dog was still barking. Theodora looked out in time to see the apparition descend.

The instant the woman's feet touched the ground she caught up what appeared to be a black bag, then

glanced up, and spying me on the piazza roof, raised her other hand, and shook it slowly to me, as if enjoining secrecy and silence. In a moment more she and the old dog had disappeared from view.

"It's Molly!" Theodora whispered, in wide-eyed astonishment. "She's got away!"

I crept back hastily into the room, and we ran to look along the hall again, where by the lamplight we saw one of the elderly men still planting blows in the door; and despite our alarm, we both laughed in nervous glee over the idea that Molly had given them the slip.

Blow after blow resounded horribly through the house, but at last there was a crash, followed by a sound as of beams or boxes falling down. The door had been so barricaded that it was several minutes more before the men could effect an entrance. At last they got in; and then Theodora and I could but laugh excitedly again at the snarl which one of the brothers gave when they found the window open and the bed-cord hanging from it.

Away they all went, pell-mell, down-stairs and out into the yard and round the house and barn. They began to call, "Molly!" and "Beave! Beave! Come, Beave!"

"I don't believe they will find her!" whispered Dora, exultantly.

"I don't," said I. But for a long time we sat there, listening in the moonlit window.

After a while they all went back into the house, and there was further talk in the parlor. Then our inhospitable relatives went to bed. The moon had now set, but it must have been near daybreak. Not long afterward we noticed, with a vast sense of relief, that dawn was lighting the hills; and we waited only for it to grow light enough so that we could steal down-stairs and out at the front door.

It had been the longest night I had ever known,

and the most exciting one. The morning, moreover, was cheerless and chilly. We shivered from cold. There was frost on the dooryard chips as we went on tiptoe over them to reach the barn, where we had left old Sol.

The horse was in the stall where we had hitched him. He whinnied when he saw us, in expectation of his oats.

"Not now, old Sol," said I.

"We will stop and feed him after we have gone a little way," Theodora said.

But when we looked for our harness, all that we could find was the "saddle"; the bridle, collar, tugs and hames were missing; and so was our box of food!

We searched the barn. I even climbed on the grain scaffolds; and my cousin cautiously explored the stable, nearer the house. She found our hames and tugs, hanging there with another harness. After this discovery we searched the stable high and low, and finally, in a large grain-box, found a bridle and a collar which we thought were ours.

By this time the sun was peeping up, for we had spent at least an hour searching for our harness. As we drove slowly through the dooryard we heard a jeering young voice, and saw the frowsy head of the black-haired boy at one of the windows.

> "There goes the little down-easter,
> Riding with his sister!"

he sang at us.

"Where did ye find your bridle?" he bawled, after we had got past.

"Don't notice him," whispered my cousin. But if anything could have tempted me back to that house, it would have been the chance of getting hold of that little villain for about one minute! We had no doubt

it was he who stole or hid our box of food; and we were both grievously faint and hungry, having eaten hardly anything for the last twenty-four hours.

But a good Samaritan hailed us from the door of the house next below the old Dresser place. The woman neighbor who had talked with us after the funeral came out to ask what had occurred during the night.

"Now did you ever!" she exclaimed, scandalized by the few facts which we disclosed to her. "Did you ever hear of such works!"

When she learned that we had had no breakfast, she was for taking us into her house. We did not deem it best to stop, but she insisted on bringing out to us each a cup of coffee and a doughnut. While we were drinking the coffee, she improved the opportunity to free her mind again as to those brothers.

She would have said much more, but we drove on as soon as we could get away; for we thought it best to go four or five miles before stopping to eat.

No one can imagine what a relief it was to feel the distance lengthening between us and the old Dresser place! Theodora drew a long breath of greater hopefulness. "We will have breakfast at Lovewell's," she exclaimed, "and to-morrow we shall be home again—after all!"

My own spirits rose, and I touched up old Sol. Just then, however, as we passed a road corner, we heard a cry of "Whoa-up, there!" although we saw no one.

Instead of stopping, I applied the whip again, being resolved not to be captured. But Theodora exclaimed, "Why, it's Molly!" And then we both saw her coming out from behind some bushes at the fork of the road. She had a black leather valise in one hand and was leading the huge old dog by a long chain.

"Going right by without stopping, were you?"

she cried with a broad grin that showed her wide front teeth. "Whoa-up, there!"

I pulled up, and Molly came straight to the wagon. "Got room for another passenger?" she asked.

"I think we can make room," said Theodora.

Thereupon Molly tossed her valise under the seat, jumped in, and swung the dog's chain round over my head for him to run on behind. "Go ahead!" said she. "I'm in. But start up easy, so as not to yank old Beave.

"Saw me getting out of the window by the light of the moon, didn't you?" she exclaimed to me, as I started the horse. "Those old skinflints were hard after me. They nearly tore the house down last night. I didn't think they'd break into my room, but they did. They were that crazy after grandpa's money and deeds!"

"Did they find the money?" I exclaimed, with a boy's curiosity. "Have you got it?"

"Ask me no questions and I'll tell you no lies!" retorted Molly, laughing in my face.

Theodora and I felt rather queer over that, although we were keenly interested.

"Did you see 'em swarm out and hunt for me?" cried Molly, after a moment's silence. "Beave and I were away down the road, harking to see which way they'd come," and she burst out laughing again, but stopped short and glanced first at my cousin, then at me. "Don't you go to thinking things!" she exclaimed. "I haven't done anything or got anything that doesn't belong to me. I haven't a thing that Grandpa Dresser didn't give me himself."

Molly's assertion may not have constituted legal evidence, but Theodora and I were inclined to believe her. But we felt ill at ease, the more so because she kept looking back along the road, as if fearing pursuit, and urged me to drive faster.

"He can go on down to Waterville!" Molly ex-

claimed, when I spoke of stopping to feed old Sol. "Let me drive him." When I declined, she winked good-naturedly at my cousin. "I suppose it does look better to have the *man* drive," she remarked.

I insisted on feeding the horse; and while we waited beside the road for him to eat his oats, Molly led old Beaver back a little way to drink at a rill. She was apprehensive, she told us, that homesickness might induce the dog to turn back if she let him go free. "He was grandpa's dog," she said. "I promised I'd take good care of him as long as he lived."

While she was gone Theodora and I compared notes. "Isn't she a queer one?" said I.

"She hasn't had very many advantages," my cousin admitted. "But do you think she intends to go home with us?"

"Only to Waterville, I guess," said I.

Theodora was far from sure as to this. "What would grandmother and the old squire say if we brought her home with us? And that awful dog, too?" she whispered. Our responsibility for Molly loomed up suddenly large. She came back before we could settle what we ought to do; and we were rather quiet in the wagon as we drove on for several miles.

Stirring events were at hand. Six or seven miles above Waterville Molly, who kept a wary eye back along the road, jumped to her feet.

"There they come!" she cried.

"Who? Where?" said I.

"'Rastus and Ethan!" cried Molly. "And that's Calvin and one of those mean boys of his in the wagon behind!"

Two wagons were certainly coming on at speed, a quarter of a mile or less behind us. Immediately, too, a distant shout of "Stop! Stop, you!" was borne to our ears.

So far from heeding the request, however, Molly

"THERE THEY COME!" SHE CRIED

snatched the whip from the socket and gave our steady old Sol the greatest surprise of his life! I had all that I could do to manage him; and for some distance we tore along, towing old Beaver after us in a manner which I fear must have been very painful to his infirmities.

CHAPTER III

FOR half a mile or more we went on at a great rate, Molly glancing back and using the whip. I had all I could do to hold the reins. Theodora clung to the arm of the seat. At best, however, our old Sol was never a fast horse. "They're gaining on us!" Molly exclaimed, desperately. The rattle of the pursuing wagons sounded louder.

Suddenly Molly reached for her old black valise under the seat and then stood up, clutching my shoulder to steady herself. We were passing a place where the road crossed a small brook, and there were clumps of black alder and elder on both sides. As we coursed round a bend here, just after crossing the brook, Molly threw her valise off into the bushes.

I glanced at her in some astonishment. But she shook her head at me, and on we went past the bushy place and along the road beyond for a considerable distance.

The first wagon was steadily gaining on us, being now no more than two hundred yards behind. Molly laughed and put the whip in the socket.

"Let 'em catch us if they want to," she said. "But don't you so much as yip, or snicker, either!"

I had little thought of "snickering"; and as for Theodora, she was so alarmed and so fully occupied holding on that she had hardly noticed what Molly did.

Old Sol soon slackened his pace, and immediately we heard the two wagons closing upon us. In the first were two of the elderly men whom we had seen at the funeral. One was driving. Their horse was breathing hard.

"Stop, I tell ye!" the other called out, authoritatively.

"What for? What business have you to stop me?" I replied, valiantly, swelling with a sense of our invaded rights.

"Business enough, you sassy boy!" said the voice behind.

"That's Ethan," whispered Molly. "Pull up. We may as well have it out with 'em."

I stopped accordingly, old Sol nothing loath, and Molly turned round.

"Good morning, Ethan Dresser!" said she, with a ludicrous assumption of politeness. "Did you want to see me for anything?" And with that she jumped out of the wagon and drew the lolling old Beave by the chain till he sat down close to her beside the road.

Ethan Dresser had also got out, but on the other side. He came to our wagon, peeped under the seat, and then felt the oats in our bag with his fingers. My cousin had a small travelling-bag. Ethan seized that, shook it, and then looked in it.

"You've no business to do that!" I exclaimed.

He gave me a malignant look. "You shut up," said he, "or I'll warm your jacket for ye!"

Meanwhile the other wagon had come up; and it added to my sense of outrage to see that the boy with Calvin Dresser was no other than that black-haired imp who had jeered our departure that morning. He sat holding the horse when his father got out to come to us, and presently chanted one of his sweet little couplets at Molly:

> "Red-headed Molly Tother-lie,
> With a mouth as big as a pumpkin pie!"

Molly merely shot a glance at him; for a third wagon had now overtaken us, which proved to contain the lawyer whom the brothers had brought to the funeral the day before.

"Good morning, Mr. Dolan!" Molly called out to him. "I was quite sure I saw you at grandpa's funeral yesterday."

The young man laughed and said, "Good morning, Miss Totherly!" I thought he looked a little ashamed of himself, or of the company he was in. But he came up to our wagon and cast an amused but sharp eye into it, then said something to 'Rastus, who came and undid the boot on our fender to look in it.

Ethan then ordered my cousin and me to get out. I refused; but Theodora, who was greatly terrified, obeyed, and stood beside Molly.

"What have you in your pocket?" 'Rastus said to her.

"Nothing that concerns you, sir," Dora replied.

"Humph!" he grunted. Calvin meanwhile had jerked the wagon cushion from under me. He and Ethan looked beneath it, and also felt it with their hands. Their lack of success put them in an even worse humor. And now all three of them went up to Molly.

"We're going to know what you've got in your pockets!" snarled Calvin.

"I haven't any pockets!" said Molly.

"You are a sly, thievish hussy!" said Ethan.

"I am not. Don't you dare call me that again, Ethan Dresser!" cried Molly, her gray eyes suddenly aflame. And the old dog growled. "Beave would shake the life out of you if I gave him the word!"

"If I had an ax here I'd kill that dog!" cried Ethan. "Cal, cut me a good thick alder club! We'll see who's comin' out on top here!"

Theodora fled to the other side of our wagon. Beave was now growling frightfully. Molly had put one hand in his collar and stood firmly at bay.

But Mr. Dolan now approached Ethan and said something to him in low tones, evidently cautioning him, for in reality they had no warrant for stopping

or searching us on the highway. Probably no one knew it better than the young lawyer. They presumed on the fact that we were little more than children and far from home. Beyond doubt, too, they had strong reasons for suspecting Molly.

"Better not," we overheard Dolan say to them several times. "May make it serious for you."

He turned to Molly.

"Now, Miss Totherly," he began, in winning accents, "I am sure you would not wish to do what is wrong. Had you not better put all this in the hands of the law and have it settled legally and right?"

"What's right is all I want," said Molly. At this moment old Beave thought Ethan and 'Rastus were approaching too near, and jumped toward them with a growl. Molly barely held him, and the brothers drew hastily back.

"I'll let go of him if you come near me again," said Molly.

There was no doubt as to the dog's intentions, and they backed off a little. Young Mr. Dolan resumed his persuasiveness.

"I really feel for you, Molly," said he. "I should not like to see you have to go into court or to prison."

"You won't see me go to prison," said Molly, laughing. "I've done nothing to go to prison for, and don't mean to."

"You know, Molly," said Dolan, "that you can bring in a legal bill by the week for all the time you took care of your grandfather, and the court will allow it at a good rate of wages. The law will deal justly with you, and generously, too."

"No need of any bill," said Molly. "I didn't take care of grandpa for money."

"But you would want something," rejoined the lawyer. "You might be in need of it."

"Grandpa looked out for that," said Molly, smiling broadly.

"How so?" said Dolan, keenly.

"If you were *my* lawyer I'd tell you," retorted Molly, laughing outright. And Dolan himself could hardly refrain from smiling.

"Well, Molly, that may come later," he said, with a not unprofessional glance at her. "But you had much better give up what you have taken illegally," he continued. "Your grandfather's estate must be lawfully administered. Now if you have his money here, or his will—"

"Mr. Dolan," said Molly, "I haven't a cent of money on me here, nor so much as a piece of paper."

Dolan regarded her thoughtfully. He evidently believed that she had spoken the truth, for he at once went on another tack. A boy can sometimes be startled or frightened into revealing facts. Like a flash he turned on me.

"Where's that money?" he shouted, with a savage suddenness.

But in this case the boy had not seen any money. "I don't know," said I. "I know nothing about this."

"I am sure I don't," Theodora added, earnestly.

Dolan looked nonplussed. The brothers were snarling together at Ethan's wagon. Two teams came along and passed us, the people regarding us with much curiosity.

"Molly," said Dolan, confidentially, "are you going far? Where are you going?"

"Why, Mr. Dolan!" exclaimed Molly, with assumed archness. "Did you want to see me home?"

The young lawyer laughed, but looked sheepish. "You are a very nice girl, Molly," was all he said, and he went to speak with his three unpromising clients at their wagon. But immediately he returned to us and addressed himself to me much less savagely. "Are you going home by way of Waterville?" he asked.

I said "yes" before stopping to reflect that I was not obliged to give him information.

"Wait till we drive past you, then," said Dolan. "We want to drive faster than you do," he added, by way of an explanation, which was probably not the true one.

We waited accordingly, and first 'Rastus and Ethan drove scowling by us, then Calvin and his black-haired son. The latter had been obliged to sit in the rear and hold the horse, but had doubtless been an interested spectator of our humiliation. His father had now taken the reins, and as they passed, Calvin, Jr., thinking himself safe under the parental wing, threw in his small contribution of spite to Molly again, singing out:

"Sorrel-top! Sorrel-top!
You'll soon be in jail!"

But he had sung once too often that day. Dropping Beave's chain, Molly was in the back of the wagon at a bound.

"You little tike!" she exclaimed, and gave him two slaps on the ears that sounded like firecrackers. She was out before Calvin, Sr., could turn round to interfere; but the boy's howls told of fair work done. The lawyer was driving up behind to pass us. I looked quickly to see what he would do. He seemed to be shaken with suppressed laughter. But Calvin was muttering threats; and, indeed, Molly had done an unwise thing—as the event showed. They drove on, with backward glances of ill-favor, until a turn and bushes beside the road hid them from view.

"Now you stay right here a minute," said Molly, after watching the three wagons out of sight. "I left something back beside the road;" and she set off to go back, still leading old Beave.

Theodora wondered what she had gone back for.

"She threw out her valise," said I. "She's gone back to get it."

"Oh!" cried my cousin, in fresh alarm. "Do you suppose that money they talk about was in it?"

"I don't know," said I. "Maybe."

"O dear, this is dreadful!" Theodora exclaimed. "Why, it's like stealing, isn't it?"

"But Molly says her grandpa gave it to her," said I.

"Oh, I don't know what to think!" cried my cousin. "Why, we may all be arrested for having that money in our wagon!" Such sudden terror fell on us that we had wild thoughts of speeding up old Sol and leaving Molly and her valise behind. Dolan's talk of the law had filled us with alarm.

Molly returned suddenly without the valise. "I've been thinking," said she, "that we had better not go to Waterville."

"But we must go on home," said I.

"I know," replied Molly. "But I don't believe we had better go to Waterville. Why do you suppose that lawyer was so particular to find out that we were going there?" said Molly, darkly. "I believe they mean to nab us down there! That's why they drove on ahead."

This put new fear in Theodora and me. "But we don't want to go back to the old Dresser place," said I.

Molly thought a moment. "We can go up to Pishon's Ferry and cross the river. There's a road on the other side. We can go to Belgrade instead of Waterville; that will be on your way home."

"It will seem like running away, as if we were guilty of something," Theodora objected.

"We might as well do a little running," replied Molly. "That Ethan's bound to raise some kind of a row—and they've got a lawyer to help 'em!"

Uncertainty of the darkest shade beset our minds. But the instinct to escape led us to turn old Sol and take the back track.

"Whoa-up!" said Molly, when we came to the little brook and the bushes where she had thrown out her valise. "I dropped something here," she added, with a grin, and gave me old Beave's chain to hold, while she jumped out and looked in the bushes. "Here 'tis!" she exclaimed, emerging from the sweet elders with the valise and an even broader grin.

She put her valise under the seat, jumped in and took the chain. "Now drive," said she, "if there's any drive in you!"

I drove back up the road to the little place called Pishon's Ferry, where we first blew a horn, and then crossed on a ferry-boat to the west bank of the Kennebec. The ferry fee was ten cents, which Molly insisted on paying.

"Oh, I'm rich, if I've got all they accuse me of taking!" said she, with a great laugh. But Theodora and I felt wondrously uneasy.

A guide-post not far from the ferry pointed the way to Norridgewock; and we drove on for two or three hours, coming at last to a small village, where the pangs of hunger led us to buy three dozen crackers and a pound of cheese at a grocery. Molly, I remember, went back and bought two dozen smoked herrings.

Not to make a spectacle of ourselves in the hamlet, we drove on with such patience as we could summon for some distance farther, to the shore of a large pond, where we unhitched and fed old Sol, and then laid out our eatables on a large, flat stone by the waterside.

It was a beautiful place; and now that we were on the other side of the river, a false sense of security beguiled us into remaining for an hour or more.

Molly made birch-bark drinking-cups to set on the stone; and after we had eaten and fed old Beaver on herrings and cheese, she made him hold a cup of water on his nose. At the word "Fire!" from her,

he would throw it high in the air and catch it in his mouth.

We should have done much better if we had hastened on toward home.

CHAPTER IV

THOSE covetous brothers had determined not to let Molly go home with us. They thought that she had Uncle Dresser's money and papers with her, or had concealed them. There were no grounds, however, on which they could obtain a warrant for her arrest—or, rather, there had been none until, unfortunately, Molly herself furnished them by cuffing Calvin Jr.

Calvin Sr., Ethan and Erastus were not slow to avail themselves of this pretext. By their lawyer's advice, probably, they trumped up a charge of assault and battery against Molly; and on making application for her arrest before the municipal judge at Waterville, Calvin Jr. was coached to cry and sob as if he had really sustained a serious injury. The object was to bring Molly back, and frighten her into revealing what she knew of her grandfather's property.

Had the authorities at Waterville been aware of this, they would no doubt have refused to issue a warrant; but in view of the testimony as to the assault, the warrant for her arrest was issued. The deputy waited for us to come into town, and remained on the lookout until nearly noon.

We did not come, having turned back and crossed the Kennebec at Pishon's Ferry, as has already been said.

Satisfied now that we were somehow giving them the slip, the brothers, the lawyer and the deputy set off up the road, and followed our wheel marks to Pishon's Ferry. There they learned that we had crossed the river, and crossing over themselves, gave chase.

From eleven to twelve o'clock or past we had been losing time by the shore of the pond in Smithfield. Now that we were on the other side of the river, we felt quite safe. We waited for old Sol to rest and eat five quarts of oats; we ourselves lunched on our crackers, cheese and herring. We had planned to proceed as far as Livermore that night, and reach home the next day.

While we were here Molly first divulged her purpose of going home with us. She could hardly have failed to notice that Theodora looked ill at ease.

"I know I have not been invited, Cousin Theodora," said Molly. "But I'm your grandmother's grandniece, and I don't know where else to go.

"I want to talk with your family," she continued, tears coming suddenly in her eyes. "I want to have them tell me what I ought to do. For I mean to do the right thing. But I won't give in to 'Rastus, Ethan and Calvin. I know just what grandpa thought of them. Grandpa didn't mean them to have a dollar of his property. He said they had had enough out of him already.

"Grandpa always liked your family," Molly went on. "He said if I was ever in trouble to go to them, and that they would do the right thing."

This was an entirely new view of the case. Theodora grew sympathetic. We began to feel that perhaps we ought to take Molly with us, although I remembered that the old squire had expressed himself as very averse to becoming involved in this property dispute. Molly and her valise were likely to bring trouble; but we could see no way of getting clear of her. And there, too, was that enormous dog!

We felt a proper loyalty to grandmother and the old squire. They had given six of us children a home with them, and we made their table a full one. For us to bring Molly and her big dog back with us seemed indiscreet, if not ungrateful.

Thoughts of our responsibility disturbed us as we drove on that afternoon through the towns of Rome, Mount Vernon and Fayette, to Livermore on the Androscoggin River.

Such a region of ponds and lakes I had never been in before. There were ponds on all sides of us. We saw more than twenty that afternoon, some of them large sheets of water.

Probably the roundabout route which we took rendered it difficult for our pursuers to keep on our track. Old Sol, too, being now headed toward home, made good time, trotting on vigorously whenever the nature of the road permitted. We did not reach Dolloff's Tavern, at Livermore, however, until after sunset; and for the last hour or two all three of us had been so sleepy that we could hardly sit up in the wagon. Theodora and I had not closed our eyes the night before, nor, indeed, had Molly.

At the tavern we wrote our names in a much-blotted old register. The people seemed rather curious about us, but gave us a good supper. I then went to the stable to look after old Sol, and gave him his oats myself, the old squire having cautioned me never to trust that duty to hostlers, who might give the oats to some other horse if they were not watched.

Mrs. Dolloff and her daughters were afraid of old Beaver, and objected to having him indoors. So, after feeding him, Molly hitched him by his chain in a shed at the rear of the stable.

Mrs. Dolloff showed us to our rooms up-stairs, Theodora's and Molly's adjoining, but mine being at the other end of the hall. I was soon asleep, my last waking thought being the pleasant one that we would get home by noon the next day.

Our slumbers, however, were destined to be of brief duration. Ethan Dresser and the deputy sheriff reached the tavern at about ten o'clock in the evening. After following us to Norridgewock, 'Rastus, Calvin,

Calvin Jr. and Mr. Dolan had turned back and gone home; but the sheriff and Ethan kept on in pursuit.

Old Beave must have scented Ethan Dresser. The instant they drove into the yard he set up a tremendous baying and growling. Then some one knocked at my door, and shouted, "Wake up! Open the door!"

When I opened it, the tavern-keeper, with a lamp in his hand, and another man—the sheriff—stood there. The sheriff said, "Seems to me you are mighty sound asleep! Where's that red-headed girl that came here with you?"

"I guess she is in bed," said I. They turned impatiently and spoke to Theodora, whom they had already wakened.

On looking into the hall, I saw that Molly's door was open; but there appeared to be no Molly in the room.

Mrs. Dolloff and Ethan Dresser now came up the stairs with another lamp, and they looked in all the rooms and closets. Theodora had dressed, and I made haste to put on my clothes. We then looked in Molly's room.

"Do you know where she is?" I asked my cousin.

"No," said Theodora. "I was asleep, but I thought I heard her door open just as those men were coming up-stairs."

After searching all the rooms, the sheriff and Ethan Dresser came back to us. "Don't you know where she is?" Ethan asked me. "If you know and don't tell us, it'll be worse for you! That girl's a thief."

"I don't believe she is a thief!" said I.

"I don't, either," said Theodora.

"You little upstarts!" exclaimed Ethan. Then he turned to the sheriff. "Look in their rooms," he demanded. "She may have hid something there."

"My warrant doesn't call for that," the sheriff objected. "I've no papers for these young folks."

Ethan had no such scruples. He and the Dolloffs, who seemed to be in sympathy with him, looked in our rooms. I suppose that the tavern-keeper may have had a right to do so, if he pleased. They found merely our small belongings, and soon went downstairs to search our wagon and the outbuildings. But soon Ethan and the Dolloffs came back into the house to question us again.

"What did Molly have with her?" Ethan asked me.

"Her dog."

"I know that. But what else?"

"I don't know."

He turned to my cousin. "What did Molly have in her hand or her pockets?"

I was afraid that Theodora might reveal something concerning the valise, and tried to give her a warning glance. It was quite unnecessary.

"Mr. Dresser," she replied, indignantly, "after the way you have treated us, if I knew what Molly had I would not tell you."

"Didn't she say anything to you?" Ethan asked me.

"Yes," I said, "she did."

"What was it?"

"She said, 'Ask me no questions and I'll tell you no lies.'"

Ethan gave vent to an angry snort, and Mrs. Dolloff laughed. "I'd like to have the handling of that boy a few minutes!" we heard Ethan mutter, as he went out to consult with the sheriff again. They stabled their horse, and coming in, registered, and went to bed.

It was now half past twelve. Mrs. Dolloff, who seemed more friendly, came in and advised us to go to our rooms again. But it was not until day had dawned that I caught another nap. Once asleep, I did not wake until the breakfast-bell rang.

On our way down-stairs Theodora and I agreed to answer no further questions. Ethan and the sheriff were at the table, but did not speak to us.

After breakfast I wished to pay my bill and go on home, but for nearly two hours the tavern-keeper put us off. It appeared afterward that Ethan wished him to keep us there during the forenoon, while they watched for Molly, thinking that she might come back.

She did not come; and at ten o'clock the sheriff and Ethan hitched up to drive away. When ready to start, Ethan went to the shed where old Beave stood, and attempted to unchain him, to take him away, perhaps; but the dog jumped at him so savagely that he gave up the effort, and they drove off. Theodora and I then harnessed old Sol, and after paying our bill, started to drive away. But Mrs. Dolloff came rushing after us.

"You must take that dog!" she cried.

"He is not our dog," I said.

"I don't care whose dog he is! You brought him here. I won't have such an awful dog as that left on my hands!"

As nothing else would appease the woman, I gave her the reins to hold, and Theodora and I went to the shed, not without misgivings as to how old Beave would receive us. He wagged his tail, however, when we approached, clearly numbering us among his friends.

After procuring food for him from the kitchen, we gave him water, then brought him to the wagon—Mrs. Dolloff promptly retreating to the house. Dora thought that she could lead him if I drove slowly, so we got in and made a start.

"What will Halse and Addison say?" I exclaimed.

"O dear!" sighed Dora. "And what will grandmother say?"

The old dog followed beautifully, however, for several miles. He appeared desirous of getting on even

faster than old Sol trotted, and the horse was now doing his best.

But this willingness to follow terminated suddenly at a point where a cart-track led up from the highway over a steep, bushy hill. Old Beave wished to take the cart-track, and pulled back and growled when we passed it. He was on the point of getting away from Theodora; but I seized the chain. And we then caught a link of it on the boot stop, and so held him.

The dog continued growling and pulling back, and was constrained to go on only by the strength of the chain. Finding it useless to resist, he followed sullenly all the rest of the way home.

We made no halt for lunch that day; we were in too great haste. And never did safe harbor, after storm, look sweeter to distressed mariners than did the old homestead to my cousin and me as we drove up the lane that afternoon.

Home, home again, after such an experience of a selfish, sordid world as we had never encountered before! Why, it seemed as if we had been gone for weeks instead of for four days!

At the farm in summer we had supper between five and six, and did the dairy chores afterward.

The family was at table when we drove into the yard. Ellen was the first to see us.

"They've come!" we heard her cry. And then she ran out on the piazza, followed by Addison, Halstead and Wealthy, with grandmother and the old squire not far behind.

I suppose that some trace of our disturbing experiences was impressed on our faces, for grandmother cried, "Why, you dear children! Are you well? Has anything happened to you?"

But Halse had seen old Beave behind us. "What a dog!" he shouted. "What a tremendous dog!"

Addison, too, was demanding, "Where did you get that dog?"

That was a sore subject. Theodora burst into tears. Grandmother gathered her in her arms forthwith.

"Come in, come in, both of you, and tell me all about it!" she exclaimed. And while Addison and Halstead led old Sol and Beave away to the stable, we, the returning ones, were escorted indoors to the table, to eat our supper and to relate our adventures.

My cousin and I took turns telling what had occurred. As our narrative proceeded, and the disagreeable features of it grew in volume, grandmother wiped her eyes disconsolately.

"Oh, to think that they should behave so!" she lamented. "To think that they should go on like that—when the name of Dresser has always been an honorable one!"

The old squire sat up stiffly. He would not trust himself to say one word, for fear of injuring grandmother's feelings. His deep aversion to such property quarrels was evident.

Halstead and Addison, who had now come in, also asked many questions as to the big dog. Such a dog had never been seen in that locality before. The boys were a little afraid of him, for he appeared sullen and out of sorts.

"I think that he misses Molly," said Theodora; and now that all the circumstances were better understood, both grandmother and the old squire were much disturbed as to what had become of Molly Totherly.

The old squire asked particularly whether we had seen the warrant for Molly's arrest and whether we were sure it was a sheriff with Ethan Dresser. We were quite sure.

"This is a grave matter, Ruth," he said to grandmother. "If there is a warrant out for this girl she needs friends. Addison, you hitch up Jerry in the light wagon. Then get your coat and the lantern.

We will drive over to Livermore this evening and see what we can find out about this."

Just then, however, Ellen caught sight of some one in the yard outside who seemed to be peering in. "Who's that?" she said.

We all turned to look. And to Theodora and me, even in the twilight, it was no stranger whom we saw there with an old black valise.

"Molly!" we both shouted.

"Yes!" exclaimed a laughing voice outside. "It's Molly. I was peeking in to see if I'd come to the right place!"

CHAPTER V

AT the sound of Molly's voice old Beave, out in the stable, barked uproariously. Theodora and I hastened forth to usher her indoors. She tossed her valise down in one corner. "I hear old Beave," she said, "so I know he's here. I saw his tracks in the road, too," she added, laughing.

"But where did you go last night?" I exclaimed.

"Oh, I just stepped out when I heard Ethan coming up-stairs," said Molly. "I was bound not to let them get my valise. I ran along the road, then climbed up a hill among some bushes, and waited there all night for you to come along in the morning. I waited there till nearly noon. You didn't come, and I got so hungry I went off to a house I saw across the pastures to buy something to eat.

"When I came back I saw by Beave's big tracks in the road that you had gone by, so I came on after you."

"Grandmother," said Theodora, remembering that our guest had not been introduced, "this is Miss Mary Totherly, a relative of ours."

"Yes, yes, child, I know," and grandmother kissed the visitor.

Theodora then introduced the old squire and afterward Addison, Ellen and the others in their turn.

"You had better call me Molly," our guest said. "I don't know myself as 'Miss Mary Totherly.'"

That set Addison and Halstead laughing. Meanwhile grandmother had made a place at the table for her.

"Oh, what a tidy place this is!" she cried, and looked round the room. "Aunt Ruth, I kept grand-

pa's house three years all alone, but oh, what a house I kept! I didn't know how at first, and afterward I was always hurrying things off. If only I'd had you to tell me, I might have done better."

Grandmother sat down beside her. "Was your grandpa a great deal of care?" she asked.

"Oh, no, not so very much," said Molly. "What bothered me most was cooking to suit him. I'm a very poor cook, Aunt Ruth! I sometimes think poor grandpa was glad to die, to get away from my cooking."

The old squire laughed and rose to go. Molly followed him to the door.

"I want to speak with you, sir, this evening," she said. "I came on purpose to talk with you. I'm in no end of trouble. It's about grandpa's property. I didn't dare to stay there at home any longer.

"You see, grandpa gave me his property. He said all along that he wanted me to have it. But his three brothers are determined to get it. There are not many things I'm afraid of, but I am afraid of that Ethan Dresser."

"Did your grandfather make a will in your favor?" asked the old squire.

"Well, yes, a kind of a will," said Molly. "I'll show you what he wrote. But they say that I must have a guardian, for I'm not quite seventeen yet. I want you for my guardian."

"But, my dear girl," exclaimed the old squire, with a disturbed look, "I think that some one else would do better!"

"I've nobody else," said Molly, plaintively. "Grandpa told me to come to you."

The old squire and grandmother exchanged looks of consternation. Much as they had desired to keep aloof from this property wrangle, they seemed about to be drawn into it.

Theodora and I went out with Molly to see old

Beave, whom we had heard barking at intervals to attract attention. We told her how he had hung back when we came to the cart-road which led up a hill.

"That was where I was waiting for you!" exclaimed Molly. "Old Beave knew I turned off there."

Theodora also told her that Ethan Dresser had attempted to unchain the dog, and that old Beave had jumped at him and growled.

"That made the sheriff laugh," said I. "'That dog'll eat you up, Dresser,' said the sheriff."

"The sheriff!" said Molly. "What sheriff?"

"The one that was after you. Didn't you know that a sheriff came with Ethan, to get you? He had a warrant to arrest you; but he said that he did not have any for Dora and me."

"No, I'm sure I didn't know!" cried Molly, looking much alarmed. "I thought it was only Ethan, and perhaps Calvin or Dolan with him. O dear, what do you suppose they will do with me?"

"The old squire knows about it," said I. "He will stand by you."

But Molly continued to look much distressed. "If I'd known it was the sheriff I wouldn't have run away," she said.

That evening we gathered in the sitting-room. Molly had brought in her valise and set it on the center-table.

"Now I want to tell you all about it," she said, "and see what you think I ought to do. But I don't want any Ethans looking in!" and she pulled down one of the window-shades which had not yet been drawn. She then opened the valise and took out a large calfskin pocketbook. "That was grandpa's," she said. "It's got his money in it, in greenbacks, and there's a little over two thousand dollars."

"Did he give it to you, child?" asked grandmother, solemnly.

"Yes, Aunt Ruth. You will see that he did. And

here are eight notes." She took up a long envelope. "They are for money that grandpa lent to different people. One, for four hundred dollars, is against Ethan Dresser; and one for three hundred and fifty is against Calvin Dresser. Neither of them has ever paid the interest money. Grandpa could never get them to pay anything; he did not like it at all. Ethan and Calvin never came to see him all the time I took care of him."

The old squire looked at the notes. The six others were secured by mortgages on farms in Kennebec County, and the sum of them was about twenty-eight hundred dollars.

Molly then took out of the valise another folded paper.

"This is the deed of grandpa's farm where he lived," she said. "You can read what he wrote on the back of it. He wrote it one day last October. There was a great rain-storm, and he was feeling very bad. He did not think that he should live till morning, and about eight o'clock he told me to fetch him his little tin trunk that had his papers in it, and the inkstand. 'I ought to have made a will long ago,' he said. 'But I've kept putting it off, thinking I'd feel better. I guess I never shall. But I'll fix it so you'll have what I've got left, for you've been a good girl to me, Molly.' Those were his very words."

"Then he did not send for a lawyer?" the old squire remarked.

"No," said Molly. "It was raining hard, and he wrote on the back of the deeds himself. I lifted him up and put pillows behind him, and laid an old atlas book in front of him. He spread the deed out on that; and I kept dipping the pen for him as he wrote. I looked up the day of the month for him, to date it. Now you can read what he wrote."

The old squire read it, and afterward grandmother and all of us read it. On the back of the deed of the

homestead Africa Dresser, in a not very bad hand, had recorded the date and written as follows:

This is my will, my last will, and my only will.

My mind is just as clear as it ever was.

I shall not live much longer, and the weather is so bad I can't get out to a lawyer's office. So I write my will on this deed. I cannot go into all the words a lawyer would use, but what I mean is that my Granddaughter, Molly Totherly, shall have the farm which this deed covers and the timber lands, covered by two other deeds which I will write on in the same way as this.

What money I have got left, I give to Molly now before I die; and I also give her my eight notes, against Hiram Frost, Amos Sweetzer, Charles Holt, William Foster, William Goodnow, Henry Decoster, Ethan Dresser and Calvin Dresser, and it is my will and wish that she shall collect them all, for they are rightly due me.

What I mean is, that I am determined to give and bequeath to Molly Totherly all my property, real and personal, and that nobody else is to have one dollar of it. I hope this will be plain enough to everybody.

I haven't got any seal, but Ezra Coffin and wife are my witnesses, and this is my signature.

AFRICA DRESSER.

Below were the signatures of the two witnesses, Ezra Coffin, Sarah H. Coffin.

"This is in Africa Dresser's handwriting," the old squire remarked. "I recollect it very well. I don't know what the lawyers will say of the will,—probably they will try to pick flaws in it,—but beyond doubt this is genuine, and he was evidently of sound mind."

Much the same in purport was written on the other two deeds, which conveyed extensive timber lands. Africa Dresser plainly desired to give the lands to Molly Totherly, and to no one else.

"These lots are valuable and growing more so," said the old squire, thoughtfully. "You will be a very well-to-do young woman, Molly, if you can hold

them. But who are these witnesses named Coffin? Where are they now?"

"It was a man and his wife who were working there at our place for grandpa," replied Molly. "They left us last November and went to Bangor. I don't know where they are."

"They must be found. Did Ethan Dresser and his brothers know them, or know that they witnessed these papers?"

"I don't think they knew anything about it. They searched for a will, but could not find it. They may have found out something, for they were all the time inquiring. Little Calvin would come to the house, pretending to visit us, and peep into every cupboard and desk, and ask me questions by the hour. He is a sly little toad! I knew that his father sent him there to see what he could find out, but I never told him anything.

"Perhaps I didn't do right," Molly went on, after a little hesitation. "But the night after grandpa died, before Ethan or any of them came, I took these deeds and notes and the money, and put them all in this valise, and hid it in my room. It seemed to me that they were mine. Then when they broke into my room, I threw the valise out of the window and slid down the bed-cord."

"Well, it was not exactly legal procedure," said the old squire, laughing. "But you had unscrupulous persons to deal with. If those men had found these deeds and notes that night there is no knowing what would have happened. Your grandfather's will and last wish would most likely have been disregarded. So I think you did quite right."

"I'm so glad to hear you say that!" exclaimed Molly. "I hardly knew what I had done, and they say that a sheriff is after me!"

"No one can harm you for keeping papers safe from persons who were behaving as Ethan Dresser

and his brothers behaved that night," said the old squire. "You need not worry."

"Do you think grandpa's property is rightly mine?" Molly asked.

"I do," replied the old squire. "It is plain to me that your grandfather has willed his property to you. He failed to do so in strict legal form, and probably the lawyers on the other side will try to pick flaws in this paper, it being a deed as well as a will. But the property is rightfully yours, or will be when the estate is administered. But I have no doubt there will be trouble about it."

"You'll be my guardian, won't you, sir?" Molly exclaimed, eagerly.

The old squire heaved a sigh. "Well, Molly, if the judge sees fit to appoint me I will do the best I can for you."

Molly jumped to her feet. "I shall thank you for that as long as I live!" she exclaimed. "I suppose you never will need care from me, but if you ever do I'll take as good care of you as I did of grandpa."

"Do you think you could cook for me?" said the old squire, with a twinkle in his eye.

"Yes, if Aunt Ruth will tell me how!" cried Molly; and they all had a laugh at that.

We heard old Beave bark again.

"Hark!" said Theodora, softly.

"Some one's come," said Addison. "I hear wheels," and he went out on the piazza; but it was now very dark.

"Who lives here?" a voice called out.

Addison gave the old squire's name.

"I thought so," rejoined another voice, one that, although indistinctly heard, seemed not wholly unfamiliar to my ear.

"That's Ethan!" Molly exclaimed. And with a sweep of her hand she gathered the pocketbook and papers into the old valise.

CHAPTER VI

WE heard Ethan and the sheriff get out of the wagon and come up the piazza steps.

"What's wanted?" said Addison, as boldly as possible.

"Isn't Molly Totherly in this house?" asked the sheriff.

"And what if she is?"

"I've a warrant to arrest her. I'm a deputy sheriff of Kennebec County. My name's Longley."

"And my name's Dresser, Ethan Dresser," said the too familiar voice. "I've good reason to be here, too. I'm after a thief. And you'd better not set your face against the law, young man."

The old squire went hastily to the door.

"No one here opposes the law," he said. "If you are a sheriff in the way of your duty every one in this house will help you. May I see your warrant?"

Longley followed the old squire into the lighted sitting-room, and Ethan Dresser came after. They glanced round; but Molly and Theodora had slipped out.

Grandmother always remembered the ties of kindred.

"How do you do, Ethan Dresser?" she said, quite hospitably. "It is a long time since I have seen you, but I hope we are still friends."

"I don't know about that!" snarled Ethan, glancing at all of us, and evidently looking for Molly. "That remains to be seen. Where's that girl that stole my brother Africa's papers?"

"I do not think my niece has stolen anything," replied grandmother. "You had better not accuse her."

"So you are going to cloak her, are you?" exclaimed Ethan, angrily. "I might ha' known it. Your sister was just like you, always putting Africa against his own flesh and blood."

"Don't speak to me in that way of my dead sister."

"I say what I know! And I'll say further, that if you cloak and hide this girl and put her against us, you will get into trouble for it. We'll have the law on ye. What are ye hiding her for? What be ye putting her out of sight for?"

This was too much. Grandmother rose up in sudden indignation; but before she could speak Molly reëntered the room. "Who says anybody's hiding?" she exclaimed, with one of her laughs. "Hello, Uncle Ethan Dresser! Did you want me for anything? Here I am."

The sheriff, who had been displaying his warrant to the old squire by the lamp at the other end of the room, now approached Molly, and said he should have to put her under arrest.

"What for?" said Molly. "What have I done?"

The sheriff read his warrant to her. "It's for assault and battery," he added, but smiled broadly in spite of himself. The old squire looked puzzled; Ethan scowled.

"Just for cuffing that little Calvin?" exclaimed Molly.

"She never hurt him at all!" I protested. "He didn't get half what he deserved."

"This looks to me to be a pretty small piece of business," the old squire remarked. "It's a shame to drag a young girl into court for such a trifle. But I imagine there were other reasons."

"Maybe and maybe," said Ethan. "But she's got to go back and answer to this at Waterville."

"Oh, I'm all ready to go back," said Molly. "Going to start now?"

The sheriff looked doubtful, as if he were not wholly desirous of an all-night drive.

"Of course not to-night," said the old squire. "This is a trivial charge, and it is late. You are both welcome to lodging and food—that is, if Mr. Dresser cares to pass the night under my roof. Otherwise, there is a tavern at the Corners, a mile and a half from here."

In fact, we all hoped that Ethan would go; but, as appeared afterward, he had a motive for accepting our hospitality.

"I must keep an eye to this young lady," said Longley. "Last night she gave me the slip."

"I will be responsible for her," said the old squire. "She will not try to escape. I shall go to Waterville with her. We will all start at six in the morning."

Their horse was put in the stable. Addison then showed them to a sleeping-room up-stairs.

Meanwhile, out in the kitchen, grandmother was lamenting the family disgrace. For her it was a terrible thing to have a sheriff come to the house. Never since the old farmhouse was built had an officer of the law had occasion to enter it in the discharge of his duty. It threw a gloom on us all. Theodora and I felt that we were largely responsible for bringing this calamity home with us.

But I was so sleepy that I could with difficulty keep my eyes open, for I had hardly slept at all for two nights. Yet all the time I was wondering about Molly's valise, and whether Ethan and the sheriff would get it.

"What has she done with it?" I found an opportunity to whisper to Theodora, as we were dispersing to bed.

"Oh, don't ask me!" she replied. "I don't want any one to ask me a word about it."

In point of fact, the two girls had run out together

to hide the valise when we heard Ethan coming in. They went to the basement of the wagon-house, which was connected with the farmhouse by an ell, and put the valise inside an old stove, which was used for drying apples in the fall of the year.

All the time old Beave continued barking so loudly and with such determination at the stable that finally Molly and Addison went out with a lantern; and to prevent him from keeping every one awake that night, they led him away to the farther barn and chained him in a stall. Old Beave held his own ideas concerning Ethan Dresser; even the smell of him put the old dog in an agitated state of mind.

Once in my own bed, I fell asleep almost instantly, and did not wake till Halstead called me the next morning.

"Get up, sleepy-head!" he said, impatiently. "Why didn't you turn out and help us milk the cows? You will have to milk four after this, for Ad is going off with the old squire and that Molly to Waterville. You and I will have it all to do." He went out discontentedly and slammed the chamber door. But a few moments later, as I was dressing in haste, I heard the door open softly behind me, and there stood Ethan Dresser, peering in. At sight of him a feeling of animosity took possession of me. But, for a wonder, Ethan was smiling, or trying hard to smile.

"Tired, wa'n't ye?" said he, with an evident effort to be pleasant. "Long ride, wa'n't it?"

I did not feel like replying, being little more than half-awake as yet.

"Have to work hard here, don't ye?" Ethan continued. "Lots of work to do, ain't there?"

I said yes.

"I'll bet ye have to work," Ethan went on, "but Fourth o' July is coming. Got any money for firecrackers and lemons and things?"

"Not a great deal," I admitted.

"Well, now," said Ethan, confidentially, and he came inside the room and closed the door, "d'ye see this?" He opened his hand and showed me a new five-dollar greenback. "That would buy a lot of nice things for the Fourth. And I'll give it to you if you'll tell me what Molly Totherly brought here with her."

Five dollars has attractions for a boy, but the covert manner in which Ethan proffered it only made me despise him the more. "What makes you think she brought anything here?" I asked, putting on my jacket.

Ethan regarded me with disfavor. "Then ye won't tell me?" said he, still displaying the bill. "Nobody'd know," he added, craftily.

"No, I will not tell you," I said.

"You know she brought some papers here," he declared. "You don't dare say she didn't."

I would not say a word more; and after a long, hard look at me, Ethan backed out and went to his own room.

But he had been astir for an hour or more, and out at the stable he had already learned something. Halstead had been giving the horses their grain, when Ethan came into the stable and asked him casually how the old squire and Addison and Molly and her trunk were all going in one wagon.

"She hasn't got a trunk," replied Halstead, off his guard. "She's got nothing but a small valise that will go under the seat."

"Small black leather valise, is it?" queried Ethan; and Halstead nodded before he thought what he was revealing. That bit of information was not lost on Ethan. He knew the leather valise in which his brother Africa always carried his papers.

The old squire, Molly and Addison had already taken breakfast. Grandmother, Theodora and I were

at the table with the sheriff and Ethan. Hardly a word was spoken. Grandmother, indeed, had been shedding tears over Molly, grieved beyond expression that she should be in the hands of the law.

The old squire deemed the charge against her a trifling one, and was chiefly concerned about the will and the property. He feared lest, plainly as Uncle Dresser's wishes had been expressed, his three brothers and their lawyer might succeed in having the will set aside. The witnesses to the will, too, must needs be found and kept under observation. As they were poor people, he feared that Ethan Dresser might find means to tempt them into giving testimony in his favor.

It was for this reason that the old squire had determined to take my older cousin, Addison, to Waterville, and have him go from there privately to Bangor, to look up Mr. and Mrs. Coffin. Addison was a prudent boy, to whom a matter of this sort could be safely entrusted.

Legal advice would also be necessary; and after the charge against Molly should be disposed of at Waterville, the old squire had resolved to take her and the papers to Portland, and put the case in the hands of a young lawyer there who had already won renown at the bar, and whose name is now a familiar one in national politics.

The old squire could hardly have slept much that night. At four o'clock he waked Molly, and the valise was quietly rescued from its hiding-place in the wagon-house cellar. The deeds containing Uncle Dresser's will were taken out. Molly concealed these papers inside her dress, but the more bulky package of money in bills, with the notes, insurance policies and other papers were left in the valise, which they locked up, with grandmother's knowledge, in a chest in the old squire's sleeping-room, adjoining the sitting-room, on the ground floor of the farmhouse.

Halstead had already harnessed Ethan's horse. The sheriff got into the wagon and sat waiting, but Ethan himself lingered. Probably he wished to make sure that the black leather valise was put in the wagon. I believe that he meant to capture that valise by fair means or foul, during the day or at Waterville.

No valise was brought out, however, and Ethan behaved oddly, as if reluctant to get into the wagon with the sheriff and drive away. But immediately Halstead brought our team to the door, and the old squire got in.

"Shall we go ahead of you?" the old squire said to the sheriff.

"Suit yourself, sir," Longley replied. Thereupon our team drove off at a good rate, leaving Ethan and the sheriff to follow on.

Grandmother was still wiping her eyes; Theodora and Ellen gazed wistfully after the disappearing wagons, then went to feed old Beave and condole with him.

Halstead and I had grave responsibilities devolving on us. Hard work was staring us in the face.

"Plant the potatoes as fast as you can," the old squire had said to us. "The ground is all ready. The girls must help you drop the seed and plaster."

Our spring work was, indeed, pressing hard, and there was no saying when the old squire and Addison would return. We hastily finished the morning chores and turned the cows to pasture, then furrowed an acre for potatoes and drew the seed and plaster to the field. The seed-potatoes had then to be cut in halves.

Meanwhile Halse had summoned the girls. "Come, Dora and Nell!" he called to them. "You've got to help us. Grandfather said so." And they came, but with wry faces, for dropping seed-potatoes with plaster is anything but clean work.

All that long May forenoon we toiled in the field

and planted half an acre; but there were three acres more to plant and the pasture fences to mend.

Old Beave whined piteously when I went to carry him water at noon. While we were in the field that afternoon the old dog broke loose, and pushing open the slide door with his nose, coursed round the house and took to the road, dragging about half his long chain after him. Grandmother saw him, but deemed it useless to call us.

We had other troubles. That night the sheep, which had been driven up to the back pasture two days before, came down to the barns, apparently much frightened. After counting the flock the next morning, we found that a ewe and her lamb were missing; and on going to the pasture, we saw the sheep's pelt, where a bear had torn it off. Halstead now attempted to start a bear-hunt, but found our neighbors lukewarm on the subject, as they were very busy with their work.

On the following day our cows and young cattle escaped from the pasture, and one of the steers became "mired" in a bog. It required all our efforts for several hours, with old Sol and a tackle and block, to extricate the animal.

These untoward incidents of farm life wasted our time. We planted hardly more than an acre in the three days. The next day was Sunday, but on Monday we set to work with good-will. We furrowed another acre, and by three o'clock that afternoon had it planted. The girls, who had now grown interested in the work, urged us to furrow another acre.

"Nothing hinders to-day," said Ellen, "but there's no knowing what will happen to-morrow."

Halstead hitched old Sol to the plow, but we had made only two furrows for potato rows when we saw our little Cousin Wealthy coming to the field in great haste.

"We've got company!" she cried. "You must put up their horse."

"Who's come?" asked Ellen.

"I don't know; they're strangers," replied Wealthy. "It's an old man and a boy. And I don't believe grandmother's very glad to see them, either."

"Why? What did she say?" asked Theodora.

"She said, when she saw them out of the window, 'For the land's sake!' But they sat there in their wagon right in front of the window, and at last grandmother went to the door.

"'Howdy-do, Ruth!' said the old man. 'Lookin' just as fair and rosy as when I used to beau ye round forty year ago!'"

"My!" gasped Ellen. "What did grandmother say to that?"

"She never smiled," said Wealthy. "But she looked straight at that old man and said, 'Calvin Dresser, what's brought you here?'"

At the name of Dresser Theodora cast a frightened look at me. "It's old Calvin and little Calvin!" she cried.

CHAPTER VII

AT the age of thirteen I was so near forgetting the duties of hospitality as to think of drubbing Calvin Jr. at sight. Our harness which he had hidden, the ugly faces he had made, and the jeering songs he had sung at us clamored for satisfaction.

"I'll pay him up now," said I, as we went to the house to take care of their horse; and even Theodora's eyes gleamed at thoughts of squaring accounts. "But we mustn't, not while he is here visiting," she said.

When we reached the house Calvin Dresser had hitched his horse to a post at the stable and gone indoors, but Calvin Jr. came out and drew near as we unharnessed.

"Hello!" said he, keeping off a bit.

Theodora said, "Hello!" rather coldly.

Calvin Jr. drew a little nearer and said, "Hello!" to me again with a grin.

Thereupon I turned and looked him in the face. "What did you hide our harness for? Why did you make faces at us and sing mean songs at us?" I exclaimed.

"Oh, I was only in fun," said Calvin Jr.

"Don't!" whispered Theodora to me. "Don't do as Molly did."

The thought of Molly, in jail for aught we then knew to the contrary, for cuffing Calvin Jr., had a somewhat sobering effect on my temper.

"You had better not play any of your tricks here," I said. "What are you here for?"

"Pa and I came to make a visit."

We put up their horse, but none of us could understand why they had come; they had never visited us before.

At the supper-table that evening, however, one would have supposed to hear Calvin Sr. talk that they were our dearest friends. The old man ran on at great length about former times, when he and grandmother were young. Then he talked to Theodora and to me, and afterward to Ellen and Halstead, and even to little Wealthy, asking us all about ourselves, and what we liked and did not like. I think that he quite disarmed grandmother's first suspicions, for he mentioned his brother's death and spoke of Molly Totherly, saying he hoped the law would do the right thing by her. Little Calvin sat by and grinned at us steadily.

Yet despite all the old man's effusiveness, there was a note of insincerity in his voice which Theodora and I both noticed; and even Ellen, who had never seen him before, said in the kitchen after supper that she believed he was an old snake-in-the-grass!

Later in the evening grandmother ushered father and son to one of the front chambers to sleep.

In those days of youthful toil nothing less than an earthquake would have waked us boys. The next morning, however, as I brought in the milk from the barn, Theodora asked me if I supposed Mr. Dresser was sick in the night.

"He was up," said she, "going about in his stocking feet. I heard him striking matches ever so many times."

But at breakfast he appeared to be well. He talked more than ever, and little Calvin sat and grinned and watched all our faces.

Theodora and I had our suspicions, but there was little that we could do. We all went to the field to work. Our guests remained at the house, visiting grandmother.

During the afternoon Wealthy came out where we were at work, bringing us water. "How do you like that boy?" Halse said to her.

"I guess he is a funny one," she answered.

"Why?" Ellen asked.

"He's peeking into everything," replied Wealthy. "He asks mean questions."

Our suspicions, which had been growing all day, now took form. "I believe they are trying to find Molly's valise," Theodora whispered.

"Where did you and Molly hide the valise?" I asked, for I did not know.

"It is locked up in grandmother's room in the old squire's chest," she replied. "But you know grandmother keeps the key in her light-stand drawer, where anybody could find it."

"Let's go and see," I said; and we set off for the house, leaving Halse and Ellen looking curiously after us.

As it turned out, Calvin Sr. and his worthy son had been searching the house, on the sly, all day. While one of them talked with grandmother out in the kitchen, the other had been looking high and low for Molly's valise.

Ethan had told them that the valise was surely in our house. At last, one or the other of them had looked in grandmother's room, found the key to the chest and opened it.

We ran all the way to the house, but approached from the rear of the buildings and entered by the back door of the stable. Here the first thing we saw was Calvin Dresser's horse, which had just been led from the stall and hitched to a post. The collar of the harness had been put on his neck, and the old wagon had been turned, ready for the horse. In fact, the old man had already begun to harness, but had gone back into the house for something he had left, or else to speak to grandmother again.

"Why, they are going away!" whispered Theodora; and this seemed strange to us, for from what they had said we supposed that they intended to stay several days.

I looked out at the stable door to see if Calvin Jr. was about, but saw nothing of him. Theodora, meanwhile, ran up the back stairs of the ell and passed through into the farmhouse chambers, to see, as she explained afterward, if they had taken their belongings from their sleeping-room and were really going away.

As she entered the upper hall of the house she glanced from the front window, which commanded a view of the lane and of the highway to the northeast. She caught sight of little Calvin, running from the foot of the lane along the road. And she saw that he had in his hand Molly's valise!

She turned instantly and ran back down-stairs and out into the stable in great excitement. She had been gone hardly a minute. Calvin Sr. had not yet come back; we could still hear him talking to grandmother.

"That boy's got Molly's valise!" were Theodora's first words. "He's running down the road. Chase him! Catch him!"

With that I dashed out at the rear door and ran across the back field to head him off. Theodora followed fast after me; she could run well in those days. Reaching the stone wall that bordered the road, I jumped over and looked both ways, but could see nothing of Calvin Jr. Theodora overtook me as I stood there.

"Here are his tracks!" said she, breathlessly; and we ran up the road in pursuit. There were bushes on each side of the highway, and we ran on for a quarter of a mile or more, for we could see his tracks in the sand and were resolved to catch him.

Even then we could see nothing of him, but, running on, we came upon him suddenly, sitting on a rock

at a gap in the wayside bushes, where a cart-road diverged from the highway. He had stopped and was sitting, with the valise on his knees, waiting for his father to come along. They had not dared to carry the valise out to the stable past grandmother in the kitchen; but Calvin Jr. had slipped out at the front door with it and run down the lane, knowing that his father would soon overtake him.

When he saw us he jumped up and turned to run; but he had a high set of bars across the cart-road to climb, and the valise bothered him. I was over the bars as soon as he was and shouted to him to stop.

"Father! Father! Father, help!" he screamed, and started to run across the field. I caught him and held him.

"Give up that valise!" said I.

"I won't!" said he, and struck me with it. I threw him, and Theodora, who had come up, snatched the valise from his hand. Then I let him get up; but he flew at me like a young tiger, and being about of an age, we had a pretty spirited set-to for some moments. I got him down, and then Theodora interposed.

"The sheriff will be after you," she whispered. "Let go! Let go!"

I "let go," and Calvin Jr. got up, crying, and called to his father again, then snatched up a stone and threw it. I dodged it, but it came near striking Theodora, who stood behind me. I went for him again, fully resolved now to give him his deserts.

Just then, however, we heard a wagon coming along the road at a great rate. The boy heard it, too, and screamed, "Father! Father!" Beyond doubt it was Calvin Sr.; and fearful of contending with a raging parent, I let the son go, and ran with Theodora and the valise to a growth of young white birches on the lower side of the field. We gained cover before Calvin Sr. appeared, and then ran on through a pas-

ture to the forest lots beyond. We were afraid that the old man would return to the house instead of going home, and perhaps take vengeance on me for drubbing his son.

At last, toward sunset, we made a circuit of a mile or more through the woods, and came round in sight of the farm-buildings; and there we hid the valise carefully in a "double wall" bordering the fields. Theodora then went to the house to reconnoiter, promising to blow the dinner-horn for me if it was safe to return.

I soon heard the horn. Calvin Dresser and his son had not come back; and grandmother, Halstead and Ellen were wondering what had become of Theodora and me. I was somewhat scratched and disheveled; but for the time being we kept quiet.

At the supper-table, however, Theodora glanced at me, then said, "Grandmother, are you sure they didn't find Molly's valise?"

"Why, yes, child," said grandmother. "They couldn't have found it, for it's locked up in my chest."

"Well, that boy was in your room, grandmother," said little Wealthy. "I saw him come out."

"Hadn't you better look and make sure?" said Theodora.

"They did start off kind of quick and queer," said Ellen.

Grandmother rose and went to her room. She was always very sure that no one would ever think of looking for her key in the light-stand drawer! From the dining-room we heard her open the drawer and then unlock the chest. The next moment she came out in great distress.

"That valise is gone!" she gasped.

It was cruel of Theodora and me to sit quietly as we did. Theodora, indeed, was usually the most tender-hearted of girls, but such fights as we had been in that afternoon make children cruel.

Halse and Ellen, who knew nothing of our encounter, rushed to the chest to see for themselves, then came back in great excitement.

"They did get it!" cried Ellen.

"They've got it!" exclaimed Halse.

Grandmother sat down, quite weak and overcome. "Oh, what will Joseph say to me!" she moaned. "And Molly!"

"Yes, they took it," remarked Theodora, coolly. "But don't fret. We got it away from them."

"What!"

Thereupon we told the story of our pursuit and battle with Calvin Jr.

"The deceitful creatures!" exclaimed grandmother. "To come into my house, pretending to visit us, and behave like that! Calvin Dresser is a wicked old sinner!"

"Molly said that boy was 'a sly little toad,'" remarked Ellen. "What I'm afraid of is that they will be back here in the night."

"Well, they won't find the valise," said I.

"But where is it?" grandmother asked. And when we told her, she insisted that we should bring it to the house and replace it in the chest. "That's where your grandfather put it and that's where it is going to stay," said she, firmly.

None of us thought that this was wise, but after dark I brought the valise to the house, and restored it to the chest. Grandmother consented, however, that Theodora should take the key and hide it in her room.

Calvin and his son did not return; and the next day we resumed our much interrupted spring's work. Little Wealthy acted as sentinel. If any of the Dressers appeared she was instructed to run to the field and summon us.

Nothing occurred during that day, and at the supper-table grandmother declared that Calvin and

Ethan would be ashamed to come to our house again after what had happened. And any one would think so.

About eight o'clock that evening, as we were talking in the sitting-room, we heard wheels in the yard outside.

"I guess that's grandfather and Addison!" cried Ellen. We had been looking for them for five days.

"And maybe Molly, too," said Theodora.

Halse and I went out on the piazza, the girls following us. It was a dark evening, but I could discern two teams in the yard. They had stopped, and were standing there.

"Is that you, grandfather?" said Halse.

There was no reply, but two men got out and came to the steps, where the lamplight shone on their faces. One was a stranger; the other I knew instantly. It was the young lawyer, Mr. Dolan, who had been with the Dressers when they stopped us on the road below Skowhegan. He said, "Good evening!" very politely.

"I hope our business here will not alarm any of the women-folks," he said. "But it is believed that the private papers of Africa Dresser are concealed in your house. We have a warrant to search for them, and shall do so, as by law authorized. I must warn you to make no resistance and put no obstacle in our way. The penalty for doing so is severe," he added, impressively. "You will do much better to aid us. The best and safest thing for you will be to hand these papers over to the officer here without compelling us to search for them."

A week before so portentous a speech in the name of the law would have frightened us all into abject compliance. Grandmother, indeed, was alarmed. "My husband is not at home," she said. "I sha'n't resist the law. We are law-abiding people."

But there had been so much threatening in the name

of the law during the last few days that the first terrors were wearing off for us young people. I bethought myself of what the old squire had said to the sheriff. "Show us your warrant," I said.

"Yes," said Halstead, "we want to see your warrant."

"You are not obliged to show the warrant to minors who do not own the house," Dolan said to the officer.

"No, we are not obliged to show them the warrant," snarled a well-known voice behind them. And then we saw that it was Ethan Dresser and his brother Erastus who had come with Dolan.

Halse and I backed into the doorway. At sight of Ethan our distrust and combativeness rose. "You can't come in till you show your warrant!" we cried, stoutly.

Dolan and the stranger hesitated, but Ethan came past them.

"Get out o' the way!" he shouted, and pushed both of us back into the room. His brother came close behind him; and Dolan and the alleged officer followed them into the sitting-room.

"Give us that valise, or it will be worse for ye!" shouted Ethan, who seemed beside himself with fury. He shook his fist and looked ugly enough to do murder.

Poor grandmother was cowed. "I sha'n't resist! I sha'n't resist the law!" she cried. "Joseph wouldn't if he was here. Theodora, bring me my key! Where are you, child?"

CHAPTER VIII

BUT neither Theodora nor Ellen was to be seen. "Bring me my key! Where are you, child?" grandmother cried again. But no answer came to her call.

At the first sound of Ethan's voice outside Theodora and Ellen had run up-stairs to their room. The chest key had been entrusted to them for safe-keeping. They got it, scudded down the front stairs to grandmother's room, and unlocked the chest. They had barely done so when they had heard the scuffle as Ethan thrust us boys from the door.

Seizing the valise, they ran up the front stairs again, and then, after listening a moment, went on tiptoe through the long ell chamber, down the back stairs into the stable, and thence out to the dark garden and orchard, where they hid behind the stone wall and listened fearfully to the sounds in the house.

For Ethan was now in full voice, and grandmother, badly frightened, was imploring Halstead and me to find Theodora and bring the key to the chest. The wily Dolan, too, was exhorting her to give up the valise at once and save trouble for us all. Halstead, who always lost his head under excitement, had run to the wood-house to get an old gun, which we kept loaded for crows, to shoot Ethan. But roughly as he had pushed us, I knew better than to do such a thing as that, and withstood Halse in the kitchen, holding fast to the gun.

It appeared that Calvin Dresser, after his unsuccessful "visit" to us, had driven all the way home that night. He had told Ethan and Erastus about the valise and chest; and this raid on us under cover

of the law was the result. They were bent on capturing that valise at any cost; and they would have done so but for the presence of mind and pluck of those two girls. So well had Ethan and Erastus been informed as to matters in our house that when grandmother was unable to produce the key, they both forced their way into her room, determined to break open the chest.

They found the key in the lock and the chest open; and the cry of baffled cupidity and rage with which they rushed back into the sitting-room was heard by Dora and Ellen way out in the orchard.

Ethan shook his fist at grandmother, quite beside himself. Erastus was nearly as bad.

They went on in so outrageous a manner that Dolan and the officer—if he was one—became alarmed, and tried to stop them. Little Wealthy, who had gone to bed before the invasion, waked in great fear, and was crying up-stairs. Grandmother went to quiet her, and did not return.

Halstead and I stood at the sitting-room door and watched the enemy. Erastus looked in grandmother's room again. Ethan searched the parlor, then overhauled things in the dining-room and kitchen. Evidently they had hoped to frighten us into giving up the valise, and were now at a loss as to what to do.

Ethan took us in hand again. "Do you know what will happen to you if you don't tell where that valise is?" he exclaimed. "You'll go to jail! That's where you will go unless you tell us, and tell us right off, too!"

Halse retorted that Ethan was more likely to go to jail than we. "Where's your search-warrant?" he cried. "I don't believe you've got any. The old squire will fix you for this."

Ethan seized Halstead by the collar and attempted to thrash him. I laid hold of Ethan's arm, and we

were having a lively time when Dolan hastily separated us.

The young lawyer laughed, but looked anxious; the affair was not turning out as they had planned it. "Be careful, Dresser, be careful what you do," we heard him whisper to Ethan. "You will get us all into trouble."

"Yes," said Halse. "You had better be careful. You had Molly Totherly arrested for cuffing young Calvin. Now we will have you arrested for cuffing us."

Ethan glared at him and would have cuffed him again, I think, but Dolan pulled him away. They then continued looking about the house. Halse and I sat and watched them. I felt sure that the girls had taken the valise from the chest, but we said nothing. Dolan appeared to suspect something of the sort. He came presently and asked me where the girls were.

"Perhaps they have gone to bed," said I. "It's bedtime."

This reply appeared to disconcert him. They refrained from going up-stairs, and soon after went out to look to their horses.

Halstead now went up-stairs to find grandmother, but I slipped out to watch our visitors put up their horses in the stable. They had a lantern. I stood by the garden gate and saw them feed the horses from our grain-bins.

As I stood there some one came up behind me in the dark and touched my arm. I jumped in surprise. It was Theodora.

"Sh!" she whispered. "Come into the orchard. Nell and I have the valise, but what shall we do with it?"

She was all a-flutter from fear and dread. I followed her out behind the orchard wall, where Nell was hiding. They were both dreadfully frightened at what they had done and at being out in the dark

alone. Yet despite our fears as to the consequences, we felt exultant.

"They never shall have it!" whispered Nell, her teeth fairly chattering from cold and nervous excitement.

"But what shall we do with it?" Theodora whispered.

My first thought was to take the valise and go to our nearest neighbors, the Edwards family, and ask them to shelter us. "Perhaps they would think we ought to give it up," said Nell; and that we were now fully resolved not to do.

I had some thought of going to the house of a relative who lived six miles away. "But grandmother would worry," Theodora objected. "Let's go over to the Aunt Hannah lot."

The Aunt Hannah lot was a farm once owned by the old squire's sister, and adjoined the home farm on the west side. A cart-road led to it across the fields. The old house now stood empty. We set off hastily, and following the cart-track, passed the sugar-maple grove, and at last reached the dark old house. The door was fastened; but we knew of a window at the farther end which could be raised. I climbed in, then opened the door for the girls.

There was a stove in the kitchen and matches in a box on the mantel. We kindled a fire and warmed ourselves; and we were soon very sleepy, for by this time it must have been eleven o'clock. The old house was bare of all furniture, however, except a few broken chairs. We sat about the stove, falling asleep at intervals, till daybreak.

Cheerless enough the morning dawned. After an anxious debate, we decided to hide the valise, and then go back before any one was astir.

Accordingly we put the valise under some shelves in the pantry, and ran for home. It was a sharp morning. There was a white frost on the dry grass of the fields. Our toes ached from the cold.

As we neared the farm-buildings Theodora and Ellen ran to the rear of the house, to enter by the back door of the kitchen. But I came round by the front side of the south barn. I peeped round the corner to see if any one had come out. There stood Ethan Dresser in the stable door! They had remained overnight, to search the premises by daylight. Ashamed to ask lodging of grandmother, all four had spent the night in the stable on the hay. Ethan was out early; perhaps he had not slept well. He looked very sour as he stood there; but he saw me the instant I peeped round.

I drew back hastily, but had taken hardly three steps when Ethan dashed round the corner. "Young man," he cried, "where'd you come from so early? Where've you been?"

"That's my business," said I.

"You're not out so early for nothing!" he exclaimed. "You're up to some mischief!"

He made a sudden rush and cornered me between the barn and an ox-cart which stood close to it. He got a hard grip on my arm. "Now you tell me where you and the girls have been," said he.

I would not say a word.

He shook me. "I'll have it out of ye!" he cried.

With that I shouted, "Help!" three or four times. I thought that Halse might be coming out. Ethan kept shaking me. "Stop your noise! Shut up, or I'll wring your neck!" But I shouted for help again, and immediately Dolan appeared, and after him Erastus Dresser.

"Don't hurt him, Dresser!" cried Dolan; but Ethan was in a rage.

"He's got to tell! I'll have it out of the tike! The papers were hid last night. This boy knows where, and he's got to tell!" and Ethan gave me such a grip that I yelled again at the top of my lungs. A moment later Theodora and Nell came running from

the house, but stopped short at the corner of the barn, then turned and ran back to call Halstead.

"Tell us where that valise of papers is!" Ethan kept saying, gripping me harder and harder. "You know and you've got to tell."

"Is it in this barn?" said Erastus.

"No, it isn't!" I yelled; for Ethan hurt me so badly I must needs cry out.

"Is it under it?" queried Dolan.

"Look and see!" I exclaimed.

Thereupon they walked me with them round to the farther end of the barn, where a wide basement door opened into the barn cellar. But here Dolan's quick eyes caught sight of our tracks in the white frost, where we had come across the field.

"They've been away somewhere, and have just come home," said he. "They've been off to some of their neighbors."

"Where've you been?" snarled Ethan, savagely, shaking me. "Them your tracks?"

"That's for you to find out!" said I; but I got an awful grip for it.

"Where they've come from we can follow back," said Dolan. "And we must make haste before the sun gets up."

They set off across the field on our tracks in the frosty grass. Ethan marched me along with them; his hard old hand felt like a vise.

When we came to the gate that led from the field to the cart-road the tracks were less distinct; and I led them to the sap-shed among the maples, where we made maple-sugar in the spring. Here they searched for some time among the sap buckets and kettles. But Dolan, who was very keen, soon suspected my ruse. Going hastily back to the road, he found our tracks again. A little farther on we came in sight of the house at the Aunt Hannah lot.

"That's where the tracks lead!" Erastus ex-

claimed; and they marched me along till we reached the house door.

Dolan glanced at my crestfallen face and laughed. "It's here," said he. "An unoccupied house, too. Good! We can search it without a warrant."

They pushed and thumped at the door, which I had propped when we left it a few minutes before. At last they forced it open and drew me inside with them. I had now no doubt that they would get the valise. When they entered the old pantry I expected to hear Ethan's shout of triumph. In truth, I was astonished that they did not find it.

The fact was that nimbler feet than ours had reached the old house ahead of us. When Ellen and Theodora saw them following on our tracks across the field, they ran out through the orchard, and keeping in the hollow of the south field, came round through the wood-lot to the Aunt Hannah house.

Ellen crept in at the window and brought out the valise; and when Dolan, Ethan and Erastus arrived—leading me captive—those two girls were lying up in a little thicket of pines on the border of the wood-lot, below the old house, watching what went on. They had the valise, and, at first sign of discovery or pursuit, were ready to flee into the depths of the forest.

While Dolan and Erastus were searching the rooms on the ground floor, Ethan stood holding me; but he grew impatient, and at last thrust me into a rear bedroom and shut the door. Once clear of his hard hands, I lost no time in prying up the window, then ran for home.

Grandmother and Halstead had been wholly at a loss to account for our absence, nor could I give them any certain tidings of Theodora and Ellen.

In the course of an hour Ethan and Erastus and Dolan came back from the Aunt Hannah lot, looking very glum. The stranger had remained with their horses at the stable. We did not offer them break-

fast, nor did they ask it, but harnessed and drove to the tavern at the Corners. By nine o'clock they returned and began to search the premises again.

"You will have your labor for your pains," Halse said to them. "That valise is far enough away!"

They continued searching, however, till past noon, then drove to the houses of three of our neighbors, where they asked questions and told odious stories concerning us. Again they returned; but after questioning and threatening poor grandmother a while to no purpose, they finally left about two o'clock.

From a covert in the south pasture Ellen and Theodora had seen them drive away. But fearing lest they might come back, the girls did not venture to show themselves at the house, although they had eaten nothing but checkerberries all day.

But our troubles were over. About four o'clock the old squire and Addison—so long expected—drove up the lane. Molly was with them, and old Beave behind. Theodora and Ellen had seen them, and came running to the house.

The old squire, Molly and Addison were in high spirits. The charge against Molly had been dismissed by the municipal judge at Waterville as trivial. On proceeding to Bangor, Addison had found the two witnesses to Uncle Dresser's irregular will, and had induced them to return with him to Augusta.

Meanwhile the old squire and Molly journeyed to Portland by railway to take legal advice; and so well did the young attorney manage the case that two days later the will was admitted to probate at Augusta and the old squire appointed Molly's guardian.

But when the old squire learned of the outrage to which we had been subjected he was tremendously indignant.

"They shall suffer for this!" he exclaimed. "I will know whether they had a warrant to search my house or not!"

Indeed, he was much inclined to set off in pursuit of Dolan and the Dressers that very night. Grandmother, however, begged him to let it pass.

"Don't stir it up any more," she urged. "It's such a disgrace! And we are all so mixed up in it."

"But an outrage like this ought not to be passed over," the old squire remonstrated. "It's wrong to submit to it."

However, after pondering the affair over-night, he concluded to let the matter drop; and the next day we resumed our interrupted spring's work.

Neither Ethan nor his brothers made any further move against Molly's rights; and as her guardian, the old squire looked to it that they paid their notes in full, with interest.

Molly remained with us during the summer, then went to attend the fall term of the academy at Hebron, Maine. She was there for three years, and kept old Beave with her as long as he lived.

At the age of twenty-one she married, under somewhat romantic circumstances, the captain of a steam-whaler; and for many years she accompanied her husband on his annual voyages from San Francisco to the arctic.

PART SECOND

MOLLY'S BABY

CHAPTER I

WHAT a familiar sound those two words have, even after the lapse of thirty years! Molly's baby! What trouble, too, and what grief went with them for us at the old Maine homestead; what weary nights of worry and what expense, although the money part was little compared with the anguish! Generally speaking, it is to the family in the same house that a baby causes sleepless nights; but in this strange case of ours the baby was a thousand miles away, in an unknown Eskimo family, far up in Hudson Bay, at the " Jaws " of the Great Whale River, if anybody knew where that was!

It came about in this wise. Cousin Molly Totherly was an orphan, and had come to live with us in 1868. At the age of seventeen she had inherited from her grandfather, " Uncle Dresser," as we called him, what was then considered in Maine a handsome bit of property in timber lands, worth twenty-five or thirty thousand dollars. There had been an ill-natured contest, however, on the part of other would-be heirs, to get possession of the estate.

Ever after she was thirteen years old Molly had taken care of her grandfather; and as she was the only relative who showed him real affection, he had bequeathed her what he had.

Trouble followed fast, however, upon the reading of the will, even on the afternoon of the funeral; and Molly had taken refuge with us from the wrath of the old man's brothers and other relatives. Our family was drawn into the altercation, and there were many disagreeable scenes before the matter was finally settled—in Molly's favor.

Afterward she made the old farm her home most of the time for several years, while she was attending school at one of our Maine academies. All of us grew very fond of her.

Molly, indeed, was a girl of fine character. She was tall, strong, gray-eyed and auburn-haired. She was not handsome—at least, not at first sight; but she had what was better than beauty, a sunny temper and a genial, merry disposition. The longer one knew her, the handsomer she grew. It was the fine mind and splendid good temper of the girl.

Moreover, she was a girl of such good sense that even the old squire and grandmother valued her advice. She always seemed to know the right thing to do.

Shortly before she graduated at the academy, about the time she was twenty-one, Molly formed a romantic attachment for the captain of a whaling-vessel that made voyages from San Francisco to the arctic. His name was Linscott—Capt. Herbert Linscott. He was a native of Portland, Maine, and a young man of fine personal appearance, hearty and good-natured. They were married at the old farm on Christmas day; and the following spring—that of 1871—Molly accompanied her husband on his voyage to the north.

That was the season of the great disaster to the Pacific whaling fleet. Captain Linscott's bark, along with more than thirty other whalers, was caught and crushed in the arctic ice. The crews of all of them, some twelve hundred persons, escaped with difficulty, and got home only after terrible hardships. Molly's

own experience was a perilous one; and faithful old Beave perished.

Captain Linscott had lost every dollar that he possessed with his vessel and its equipment. The outlook, too, for further whaling in the Pacific arctic was especially dark. But he had a brother who for some years had been making voyages from New Bedford or Provincetown to the North Atlantic and round into Hudson Bay, for cargoes of oil from the "bottlenose whale" and "white whale," then taken up there in great numbers.

This brother, Capt. George Linscott, offered him a partnership if he would join with him in the purchase of a larger vessel; and he and Molly came East to embark in this new venture. To supply the funds for it, Molly was obliged to sell all her timber lands.

The old squire advised her strongly against this. Molly's loyalty to her husband, however, was of the unquestioning kind; she could not be induced even to hesitate, and practically everything she possessed went into that new whaling-brig.

On April 13, 1872, they sailed for the North Atlantic, and made the perilous voyage through the ice-fields of Hudson Strait, into the great inland bay of that name.

Their new brig, christened the *Molly Linscott,* came back home through the strait the following season, oil-laden. But Molly and her husband had remained at a place, called the Jaws of the Great Whale River, to protect their try-works and other property there. She sent a long, affectionate letter, however, with numerous kind messages to us all; and she described with quaint humor their life up there among the "Huskies," or Eskimos.

They lived, she wrote, in an old stone house with very thick walls, which Captain Linscott had reroofed and otherwise repaired. Near the Jaws they had established try-works for reducing whale blubber to oil,

for shipment. She did not expect to "come south" to visit us until the following year. But the most important news was that she had a little daughter, named Ruth Mary, after grandmother.

That long, interesting letter was the last one that Molly ever wrote, and, indeed, the last certain intelligence which we received of her.

The brig sailed on its return voyage the following spring, but was wrecked off Cape Chidley, and carried out to sea in the ice-fields. Capt. George Linscott and five of the crew of eight sailors perished. So far as is known, none of the crew reached the little store and dwelling round in the bay.

At the old farm, however, we heard nothing of this till months afterward, and we looked for Molly in August. But the autumn passed with no tidings from her, and winter came on.

At that time the old squire had an interest in certain Canadian lumbering operations, the care of which took him to Montreal several times that winter; and on one of these trips, in January, he heard a most distressing rumor, which had been brought southward by a *coureur de bois* from the fur company's posts on the bay. An American trader and his wife, named Lindshott, so the account had it, had been murdered by the natives at the Whale River. Lindshott was living there with his wife; and the natives had shot him at the door of his house one evening.

All that night and throughout the entire next day his besieged wife had defended herself and her baby with desperate heroism, but she was finally killed by one of the assailants, who climbed on the roof and made a hole through it for his gun. They were about to kill the baby, but one of the Husky women snatched it up and ran with it to her hut; and this man's account was to the effect that the child was alive.

There could be but little doubt that the "Lindshotts" were Molly and her husband.

The old squire came home with a sad face, for Molly had been a favorite with him, as with all the rest of us. That was a night of grief at the old farmhouse.

We tried to keep the worst details of it from grandmother's ears, but she soon found out about it, and cried much of the time for a week. And so did Theodora and Ellen. To think that our cheery, great-hearted Molly had perished in that shocking, heartrending manner was too terrible to be borne.

Yet as we thought it over, it was the fate of that baby, left up there in the north, motherless, among those squalid creatures, that most touched our hearts.

As grandmother reckoned, from what Molly had written in her letter, the baby must be about fifteen months old—a little girl; and it had been named Ruth Mary, for grandmother and for its mother.

"If they had only killed the poor little thing!" grandmother cried. "Then we would know that it was at rest. But to think of that baby, Molly's baby, our own flesh and blood, away off up there among those savage Huskies! Oh, I cannot bear it! I cannot bear it!" and she wept inconsolably.

"Why, if I were only young!" she exclaimed, starting up and walking to and fro in tremulous agitation. "If I were only young, I would go up there on foot, and I never would come back till I brought that baby!"

Of course grandmother had but an indefinite idea of the distance and the intervening obstacles between Maine and Hudson Bay. It is six hundred miles, as the crow flies, from our old farm to the foot of the bay; and although we were not then fully aware of it, the Jaws of the Whale River are more than three hundred miles farther up in the bleak north. Nine hundred miles are as nothing where there are railroads or steamships. But from the St. Lawrence,

northward, the country was then, as, indeed, it is today, a well-nigh trackless wilderness. By water, too, the difficulties are equally great, or greater. No vessels ply regularly into Hudson Bay, and very few irregularly.

It was at first believed possible to secure passage thither by going to England, and thence in one of the Hudson Bay Company's annual supply-ships, sailing from London to its various forts and posts on this great inland sea. Application at the company's office in Montreal, however, met with an evasive and discouraging answer. The company was reluctant to furnish Americans with facilities for visiting that region. The old squire had looked into all this before he came home.

At that baffling pass the matter stood for weeks. With every gust or swish of snow against the windows grandmother would glance up pitifully; and then we would all know that she was thinking of that poor baby, and how it might be suffering from cold and hunger.

In truth, the misery it gave us can hardly be described in words. There are some things in life immeasurably worse than death. The certainty that the child was dead would have come as a blessed relief. Often we said to grandmother that the baby must have died long before we had heard of it, and that it was useless for her to worry or take it so to heart. But for some reason she had a firm conviction that the child was alive.

"And to think of her living and growing up there among those dirty, cruel Huskies!" she would cry.

The old squire would sit with his brows painfully knit, but saying nothing, for there was nothing hopeful to say; and out at the stable, or about our work, Addison and Halstead and I talked it over a hundred times, and discussed every scheme we could think of for finding out if the baby was alive and transporting

it home to Maine. A score of times we gave it up in despair.

"That young one will have to stay there," we would say, and drop the subject; but every meal at table the sight of grandmother's face drove us to consider it again. In fact, we began to fear for her health.

"I don't know but that it will kill her," Addison said to me, one day in April.

"She doesn't say so much about it now as she did at first," I remarked.

"But anybody can see she is thinking of it all the time," Addison replied. "She has turned grayer, too, and looks sort of feeble this spring."

Then we would go over the whole ground again, and sometimes discuss plans with the old squire for making a trip through the woods from Montreal to the bay.

At Montreal the old gentleman had learned that the fur company had a post, or "factory," at the mouth of Moose River, which flows into the southerly extension of Hudson Bay, known as James Bay; and that at this factory it might be possible to hire a small sailing craft, called a shallop, for a trip up the "East Main," or coast of the bay, to Great Whale River.

By going to Buffalo by rail, one could take passage by steamer to a place on the northwest shore of Lake Superior, known as Michipicoten, where Indians can be hired to conduct the traveller across the "divide" to certain small lakes and streams tributary to Moose River. Fifteen days' journey by canoe down Moose River brings one to Moose Factory, on the bay.

There were also three or four other routes or trails used by *courcurs de bois*, one by way of Quebec, Lake St. John and Rupert River; another via the Ottawa River and Lake Abittibi; and still another farther west via Winnipeg, Lac Seul and the great Albany River.

Still another important item of information was

learned at the Montreal office of the fur company. Money was of no use in all this great northland. To travel, hire Indians, or buy provisions, it was necessary to deposit one's money with the fur company at Montreal, and take from there stamped letters of credit to any or all the company's posts on the bay, directing the factors to supply the bearer with what he asked for, to the value of a certain sum, named in the letter.

Addison was twenty-two years of age; and at this time he was studying at home, but keeping up with his class at one of our Maine colleges. It would be a disadvantage to him to set off on such a quest, and he would probably have to fall back a year at college on account of it. Yet he was the best fitted for it of any of us, being two years older than myself, stronger and more experienced in the ways of the world. Addison, in fact, was an unusually sagacious, cool-headed young man, self-reliant, and possessed of good judgment in most matters. If any one could make such a trip, he could, although none of us at the time had an adequate realization of the difficulties.

Of the sincerity and good faith of the fur company's agents at Montreal we were not wholly convinced, or whether they wished us success or not; but they appeared to be honorable men, and were very courteous in all their communications. They even expressed sympathy in the object of our inquiries, but were otherwise non-committal in their opinions.

It appeared that some of the Eskimos of the East Main had never been under the Hudson Bay Company's control. They were a migratory folk, that came to trade at times with the posts, but were untrustworthy and sometimes treacherous. Robbery of their store had probably been the motive leading to the murder of Captain Linscott and Molly.

It was one night about the middle of April, as I remember, that we had our last conversation about

making the trip. The old squire and Addison were in the sitting-room that evening, figuring up the winter "cut" of lumber. Theodora and I were there, but grandmother and Ellen had gone to our nearest neighbors, the Edwardses, for a call, and Halstead was away from home that spring.

"We need to hire three men on the farm this summer," the old squire remarked. "Especially," he added, after a pause, "if we try to do anything about that child up there. Addison, what do you really think about that?"

Theodora and I sat listening; and I remember that Addison took what seemed a long time before he replied.

"I'll go if you think it best, sir," he said, at last, but in a more sober tone than we had ever heard him use before. "It means losing a year for me at college. I'm sorry for that. But that child left up there is a dreadful thing, and I will go if you all think it best. Of course I don't know what I can do, but I will start, and I will find out, if possible, whether the baby is alive or not."

"That will be something," the old squire remarked, sadly. "Just to know about it."

"But if it should be alive?" said Theodora.

"Then I will try to get it from them and fetch it home with me," replied Addison. "That will be the hard part, fetching a child of that age so far through such a wild country. Doad, I wish you could go with me."

"I will go! Indeed, I will!" Theodora exclaimed, at once.

"O my dear girl," the old squire interposed, "you don't know what you are saying! You have no idea what a trip to Hudson Bay means!"

"No, Doad, you couldn't go," said Addison, soberly. "I only wish you could!

"It will cost us a good deal, sir," he continued,

turning to the old squire. "More than we think, perhaps."

"I know, I know!" said grandfather, uneasily. "That cannot be helped. I will go up to Montreal with you, and we will deposit a good sum with the fur company. You must have funds."

"When do you think I had better start, sir?"

"The sooner the better. On all accounts, we want this trouble settled and off our minds."

"I can go day after to-morrow," Addison said.

"So be it," replied the old squire, solemnly. "We can take the afternoon train and be in Montreal next morning."

"Oh, won't grandmother be glad!" Theodora exclaimed.

"I don't believe we had better let her know," remarked Addison, after thinking a moment.

"No," the old squire said. "For she will begin worrying about you."

"But I was thinking of the baby," said Addison. "Most likely it is dead. But even if it is alive, I might not be able to get it. Those Huskies may have gone away with it so far that I couldn't find them. We have to think of all these things. Then, too, they might not want to give it up. Perhaps they wouldn't part with it or sell it. They might even kill it if I tried to get it away from them."

"Oh, that would be dreadful!" Theodora exclaimed. "That would make poor grandmother feel worse than ever."

"So I think she had better not know that I have gone up there after it," Addison went on. "You can tell her, when grandfather comes home from Montreal without me, that I have been detained on business. And by and by, Doad, you can explain to Ellen," he added. The fact was that grandmother had fallen into such a state of mind about the child that we all felt it necessary to be considerate with her.

"How long do you suppose you will be gone, Ad?" Theodora asked, thoughtfully.

"That is more than I can tell. Maybe six weeks, maybe two months. Perhaps longer."

"Not less than two months, if you have to go far up Hudson Bay," the old squire remarked. "And the worst of it is that we probably shall not hear a word from you from the time you leave Michipicoten till you come back home."

"Ah, how anxious we shall be!" Theodora exclaimed.

"Oh, don't any of you worry about me!" said Addison. "I shall be all right." But of course we all knew that there were many grave dangers.

So they set off for Montreal on Thursday of that week, April 18th. Addison made his preparations quietly. None of us said anything, and grandmother supposed at the time that they were merely making a business trip.

The old squire deposited nineteen hundred and fifty dollars with the fur company, and the company's agent gave Addison four letters of credit, good for a hundred pounds English money each at any of their posts in British North America.

The old squire returned on Saturday of that week, and a fortnight later a letter came from Addison, dated at Michipicoten.

He was all right up to that point, and was just setting off with two Indians and a canoe, to go to "Moose Factory," on James Bay—four hundred miles.

And that was the last letter or message that we had from him. The great northern wilderness swallowed him up and gave no token.

By the middle of June we began to look for him; and meanwhile grandmother had surmised where he had gone, as might have been foreseen.

June and then July passed, and then August. It

was an anxious summer. Not much was said about it by any of us; there was nothing to say. We simply waited, day after day.

But September came and then October, and still no tidings from Addison.

CHAPTER II

SIX months passed with no tidings from Addison on his journey to Hudson Bay in quest of Molly's baby!

I have often thought since what a comfort clairvoyance would have been to us that summer at the old farm, the faculty of seeing with the brain instead of with the eye, seeing what is taking place a thousand miles away.

With what absorbing interest we would have followed him day by day as he paddled down the long length of Moose River to Moose Factory, at the foot of James Bay; and afterward, in June, on his tedious voyage in a thirty-ton shallop up the "East Main" of Labrador, amidst those hundreds of marsh islands, all a-cackle with the countless flocks of wild geese and ducks which annually breed there.

James Bay is one vast shallow archipelago in process of turning to dry land. For a fortnight we would have seen him wind-bound on the flats off the mouth of Rupert River, where a great delta is emerging from the sea.

From June 17th to the 22d he was among ice-floes at the mouth of the East Main River, a stream larger than the Susquehanna. Later, a terrific northerly blow drove him off to the lee of the many islands of "Solomon's Temples."

What astonished Addison was the seemingly illimitable extent of this oceanic bay. Day after day he sailed northward. At last he passed the two huge Twin Islands, and then, standing in to the "Main" again, crossed the still icy estuary of the Misstasseppi, or Big River.

On the 29th he doubled Cape Jones, and emerged

on the still broader expanse of Hudson Bay proper—for all this time he had been sailing on James Bay. Thus far, too, the shores of the Main had been low, and everywhere black with interminable spruce forests; but now high, barren mountains appeared, with a rocky, forbidding coast-line, where there were no safe harbors. Moreover, sudden, violent gales and head winds arose. But for the experience and sagacity of the young half-breed from whom Addison had hired the shallop at Moose Factory, the voyage up the East Main must have ended disastrously.

This young man's name was Sandy McKay. His mother was a Cree Indian woman, and his father a Scotch sea-captain, who had traded to the bay from 1847 to 1865. From his father young McKay had learned navigation, geography, and not a little of the history of the world. Otherwise he was uneducated; but he knew all the Indian tribes round Hudson Bay, and was able to converse with the Eskimos. His mother was with him on the shallop, and cooked their food. She had some medical skill. Her Indian name was Kapreena, but among the whites she was called Esther. The Cree women are noted for beauty; Esther had been one of the handsomest.

Old Captain McKay had desired to have his son accompany him on his return to Glasgow; but the youthful Sandy refused to leave his mother behind at Moose Factory in her old age, and elected to pass his life in the bay. Addison became much attached to him. They were of about the same age.

On July 6th the shallop reached the mouth, or "Jaws," of the Great Whale River. The place was now wholly deserted; but they found the house where the Linscotts had lived, and two huge iron kettles of the try-works, too heavy for the natives to carry off. The house, or at least all the woodwork, had been burned; only the thick old stone walls were standing, with empty tins of canned goods scattered about.

Seeing the shallop put in, an aged Indian and his crippled son who were living to the south of the river mouth crossed over to barter whalebone for tobacco. McKay was able to converse with them, and learned that the whites had been murdered by a party of Eskimos from Southampton Island, not by the more civilized natives of Labrador. The Eskimos inhabiting Southampton have little communication with the white traders of the bay.

There had been some dispute or misunderstanding over the price of goods, the old Indian said. He also asserted that the bodies of the whites were put in their house and burned with it, but that afterward certain Labrador "Huskies" had interred the remains under a pile of rough stones, which was pointed out to Addison, a few yards away from the house.

That rude cairn of stones, in that dreary place, where ice lay unmelted even in July, was our poor Molly's grave. Addison could do little to better it, save to pile up the stones somewhat more symmetrically. He thought of setting up a post or headboard; but Sandy informed him that it would probably be used for fire-wood by the first party of natives who camped there.

From these Indians Addison heard the same story —that one of the Husky women had carried off the white woman's baby. Sandy McKay and his mother had also heard this several times. But where these marauding Huskies had gone, no one appeared to know. They might have returned to the icy coves and bays of Southampton Island, or gone to Mansfield Island, or even to that unexplored land north of Hudson Strait.

This great northland, as Addison now fully realized, was not only a region of vast distances, but a country without a directory. Searching for a little baby there would be pretty hopeless. Through July they followed the coast northward, touching here and

there, but learning nothing. For two days they cruised about the big, precipitous Smith Island, where they fell in with two large *umiaks,* containing roving parties of Huskies. Some of these marine nomads professed to know of a white baby; but others declared that it had been killed by its own mother—at which somber statement they yelled with laughter.

It was impossible to rely on anything which Addison heard from the natives; and after six weeks of these futile inquiries, he gave up hope of learning anything definite. Moreover, the brief northern summer was waning. In a month more he would have to be on his way south, or pass the winter up there.

Then one day, August 8th, he struck a clue. A northerly gale bringing a great amount of ice down the coast drove them from Smith Island to the shelter of the headlands inside Mosquito Bay; and while they were there they saw smoke from the islands four or five miles farther up the bay.

Mosquito Bay is in reality a considerable gulf, opening back into the East Main. On the ordinary maps of this region it looks to be but a small expanse of water; but Addison described it as being larger than Narragansett Bay, or Delaware Bay, and having in it numerous large islands.

Still in the hope of learning something, they beat alongshore to eastward in the direction of the smoke, feeling their way with the lead through an uncharted channel, and at last came in sight of a native encampment, with fish-flakes on the beach, and numerous *kaiaks* and two *umiaks* drawn up.

As the shallop drew nearer, they counted five of the dingy skin tents which serve these people as summer habitations in place of their winter *igloos,* or snow houses. Twenty or thirty Huskies had issued forth, but stood regarding the shallop much more silently than is the usual noisy habit of Eskimos when

a trader is sighted. To reassure them, Sandy shouted, "*Chymo! Chymo!*" (Trade! Trade!) and held up a colored blanket to indicate the peaceful purpose of their visit.

But the whole crowd preserved silence; and from one of the tents low, groaning sounds could now be distinguished.

"Something is wrong with them," Sandy said to Addison. "They have had a death, I think. We must wait a bit and be careful."

Accordingly they made no haste to approach, but anchored and waited for overtures from the shore. In the course of an hour one of the men came off to them in a *kaiak* and climbed aboard—a swarthy, broad-faced Husky, with a shock of matted black hair, bareheaded, and clad in his summer garb of bird-skins. He looked strong and heavy-set, yet was no more than four feet ten in height.

"Me Mister Kubelik," he said, with the broadest of grins.

McKay and his mother greeted their visitor in the usual manner, and they conversed for some moments, Addison being unable to understand what was said. Sandy, however, explained it to him as the talk went on.

"It is as I guessed," he remarked. "These people have had a fight with some other Huskies and they have lost their head man, or chief. He was speared or shot, and is lying dead in one of the huts. His wives are mourning over him."

Addison sought to learn what the trouble was about. Sandy, however, was unable to find out exactly, but Esther, who understood Eskimo even better than her son, had gone on talking with Kubelik, and ascertained that on resorting to their birding-places, farther up Mosquito Bay, these Labrador Huskies had found a large party of wild Eskimos from the north in possession of the locality.

A number of fierce fights had followed their efforts to expel the intruders. It appeared that the Labrador Huskies, who have long had dealings with the whites, regard the more northern Innuits as savages and robbers. When referring to them, Kubelik constantly shook his head, murmuring, "*Pid-chuk-i-kuni! Pid-chuk-i-kuni!*" (Very bad people! Very bad people!)

Two other Huskies had also been wounded seriously, and were laid up in another tent, where a shaman, or native priest, was performing his incantations over them. At times they could hear his drum and rattles going furiously.

This whole party was in the depths of despondency, due to the loss of their head man and their ancestral hunting-grounds. Lifting up his voice in the native tongue, Kubelik repeatedly exclaimed that his people would all perish during the following winter, from lack of fish and birds.

Presents were given Kubelik, and on his return ashore Sandy and Esther accompanied him, but advised Addison not to do so at this particular time, these Huskies being exceedingly superstitious when their shamans have control of them.

Esther took along certain unguents and salves, to apply to the wounds of the natives, if the shaman could be so far placated as to allow her to use these remedies. And it was while she was ashore, listening to the lamentations of the Husky women and the anathemas which they poured forth against their enemies, that she picked up a hint from them which bore fruit in Addison's quest.

Squatting on the ground inside the tent, one of the wives of the dead chief, with her face in her hands, was going on something after this fashion, but in the native tongue, of course: "These bad people—these bad people—these murderers—these eaters of putrid whale fat—they have killed my husband—my husband

—my husband—they have speared him—they have speared him—they come only to rob—and to steal—and to kill!"

Monotonously and by the hour these women sat repeating the same refrain, with little variation; yet after a while Esther, in passing the tent, heard one of them say, "They killed the white woman—they killed the white woman—they stole her child—they stole her child!"

She told Sandy of this, and they then questioned Kubelik, who at once replied that these wild Innuits up the bay had murdered a white man and his wife the summer before, and that one of their women had the white woman's child. Thereupon McKay and his mother came off to the shallop to inform Addison.

This was tidings, indeed. Yet the matter bade fair to be very difficult. For the criminals, aware of their wrong-doing, would naturally be very suspicious of the approach of whites, and perhaps beat a retreat inland at first sight of the shallop.

It is very rare that Huskies commit murder for the sake of robbery; and as a matter of protection, English traders in the bay have always wreaked summary vengeance on natives guilty of that crime.

There was a possibility, too, that the shallop might be attacked. Besides his mother and Addison, McKay had with him only two Metis from Fort Churchill, to assist in navigating the little craft. They immediately set sail, however, and the wind favoring during that afternoon, they proceeded twenty or thirty miles farther along the north shore of Mosquito Bay, on the lookout constantly for this other Husky encampment.

During that day and the next they sailed, but saw nothing of the Huskies till they came in sight of the mouth of a river where there seemed to be a glacier sloping down to tide-water from among the mountains round the head of the bay.

Here, through a glass, they saw smoke and a number of summer huts with people about them. The wind was so light that afternoon that they were till nine in the evening beating up to the head of the bay.

The Eskimos, however, had disappeared from view. No one was now to be seen about the huts. They had merely been keeping out of sight, however, for just after the shallop anchored, half a mile offshore, as many as fifty Huskies suddenly made their appearance on the beach. Several of them had guns, others bows and fish-spears. Their attitude was plainly one of defiance.

McKay shouted, "*Chymo! chymo!*" the Eskimo word for "trade" to them, and held up various articles of traffic; but no response was made to this, and none of the natives came off to them that night, or before noon the next day. Esther then went ashore alone, in the shallop's boat, carrying a number of little round looking-glasses as presents for the Husky women.

This mark of good-will served their purpose so well that the head man, whose name was Doo-tok, and one of his wives came back with her to the shallop, and were given each a blanket.

Neither young McKay nor his mother had ever seen Eskimos of this tribe before. Their language differed considerably from that of the Labrador Huskies; their dress was also different in several particulars. The faces and arms of the women, too, were tattooed, in patterns such as Esther had never seen; and each had huge pockets at the shoulders of her leathern *parka,* or smock.

As yet they dared make no inquiries concerning the baby. It was necessary to proceed very cautiously. They lacked sufficient force to take the upper hand and search the encampment; and a premature disclosure of their real purpose might have precipitated a panic and a flight.

There were many children running about the camp, and here and there Esther had caught glimpses of babies inside the flaps of the tents, but she saw none that seemed to be of white parentage.

Addison had himself refrained from going ashore; but the next morning Esther hit on a plan for enabling him to obtain a view of the inside of each of the tents. In accordance with her scheme, Addison put on the fur cap, deerskin leggings, moccasins and belted frock of one of the Metis. A three months' growth of his hair also favored the disguise. They then made up a bagful of small presents, consisting of little round looking-glasses, finger-rings, toys, and papers of needles, and paddled ashore together, calling out jocosely to the youngsters and the Husky women as they drew near the beach.

After landing, they walked about for some time in a leisurely manner, Esther talking to the women, Addison following nonchalantly after her.

At last they approached the nearest of the tents, where Esther looked in, and seeing a native child asleep, gave its mother a present for it.

They then sauntered on to the next tent. By this time the Husky women, having seen what was bestowed at the first tent, were not slow to display their babies, since each one seemed to be in the way of getting a present. With the broadest of smiles they issued forth to exhibit their round-eyed, swarthy little creatures; and each in turn got something, if only a spool of thread.

There were six tents along the beach, five a little way back on the river-bank, and several others farther along the foot of a broken line of cliffs where grew a few stunted birch shrubs. The Husky women and larger children followed the strangers, all eager to see what presents would be given at the next place.

They had visited the six tents along the beach and the five on the bank of the river, but thus far had

seen only squalid little Eskimo infants, either peeping out of the huge pockets on their mothers' backs, or staring up, round-eyed, from the heaps of well-worn furs at the back corners of the tents.

From the tents on the river-bank they went to those along the foot of the crags, however, and came first to one the flap of which was closed, as if the occupants were away. But as the chattering throng drew near, a curiously tattooed but comely young woman looked forth at them inquiringly, at which the other Husky women exclaimed, *"Ted-ba wi-gar-nak!"* (She is a widow.)

"Ted-ba ni-yuk u-shu-muttok!" (She is the head man's sister.)

"Ted-ba na u-ri!" (She has no husband.)

"Ted-ba nu Mit-luk ta-bet-yuak!" (She is Mit-luk, who lives alone.) They seemed to be chaffing her good-humoredly; but the tattooed face continued staring at the strangers from the narrow opening in the tent.

Laughing loudly, not without a spice of malice, the other women now cried, *"Da-kik lu pannak?"* (Where is your baby?) *"Da-kik lu pannak, noh il-bit-una?"* (Where is the baby which is not your baby?)

Addison understood scarcely a word of this, but Esther comprehended, and made him a sign to impose caution. Accordingly, dissembling both his interest and excitement, he strolled on, as if indifferent, to the next tent.

Esther meanwhile had produced her stock of trinkets, and after some coaxing, prevailed on Mit-luk to open the front of her tent.

Glancing back after a time, and observing that Esther had effected an entrance into the tent, Addison returned quickly and looked in over the black heads of the Husky women and children.

A curious sight met his eyes.

ADDISON'S HEART GAVE A JUMP

On the *til-wuk,* or little raised platform, which in a Husky hut serves both as a sleeping-place by night and a lounge by day, sat a child on a heap of foxskins, grasping one of those little round looking-glasses in both its chubby hands, staring wide-eyed at its own reflection.

Addison's heart gave a jump. He caught his breath. One glance told him that this was no Husky baby. Molly Totherly in miniature was sitting there. The same large, clear gray eyes, wide apart, the same curling, red-golden hair, and even the roguish little dimples and the slightly upturning corners of the generous mouth, all were there.

A fierce resentment took possession of Addison. Yet there beside little Molly sat this tattooed woman, gazing fondly on her, as fondly as if it had been her own child. Addison wondered vaguely how he should manage her.

Suddenly, aware of his gaze, the Eskimo woman looked up, and her dull black eyes dilated as if from fear.

"*Twauve! Twauve!*" (Begone! Begone!) she cried, angrily, at which Esther judged it wise to withdraw quietly for the present.

CHAPTER III

IT was Molly's child, there could be no doubt as to that; and Addison resolved to carry her home with him at any cost.

His troubles, however, had but begun. These Eskimos from Southampton Island were good-humored when pleased with presents, but lawless and intractable. There were but five on board the shallop, including Esther; and fourteen or fifteen "Husky" men, several of them with guns, had been counted in this party. Addison's efforts must therefore be directed to getting little Molly by peaceable means.

Esther, going to one of the chief's wives the next day, offered six blankets for the child, on the pretense that she had taken a fancy to it.

Nothing came from this, however, or from other more liberal offers. Attoonik, the chief's wife, was willing enough to part with the child for blankets, or anything else; but Doo-tok himself would not give his consent, on account of his sister Mit-luk's fondness for it. What rendered the negotiations doubly difficult was the fact that most of the goods and trinkets which Addison had brought from Moose Factory had been given away already. Several vexatious days were spent in these futile attempts to coax and propitiate the Huskies. No other course was open to Addison; and he summoned patience to go on, quaking in his shoes every hour lest some rupture might occur or quarrel break out.

Doo-tok was of uncertain temper. As long as presents were made him daily he smiled, but he turned morose and sulky whenever the subject of buying little Molly was mentioned. No doubt he had some slight

affection for his sister, Mit-luk; and Mit-luk was really very fond of the child whom she had saved, perhaps because it was so much prettier and brighter than the small, swarthy, black-headed piccaninnies of the tribe.

Little Molly was at this time two years and two months old, and could run about and talk a bit, although after that first visit of Esther and Addison to her tent, Mit-luk had kept her very close.

In the hope of conciliating the woman, Addison carried her presents every day for three or four days. From some infantile recollection of her white parents, little Molly at once took a fancy to Addison's looks, and by the time she had seen him twice, cried out, "*Ta-kwa papa!*" (That's papa!) evidently remembering the word her mother had taught her, and recognizing Addison as a white man like her father.

The season was advancing, and in the course of another week it would be necessary to take the shallop out of that landlocked bay. Addison grew desperate; and at last, with Esther's advice and connivance, he resorted to a stratagem to carry little Molly off by night.

They had with them a considerable number of large needles, such as are sold to native women at the fur company's posts, and a number of spools of red and yellow ribbon, prized by the squaws for tying up their hair. Acting on Esther's suggestion, they now began going ashore to Doo-tok's tent late in the evening, and distributing presents of needles and ribbon to the Husky women.

By this time Esther had learned the names of all of them, and when she called them out, Addison gave to each her present, insisting that each one come for her own. The first time the plan was tried, Mit-luk had to be sent for, but she came with the others to get her yard of ribbon; and the next morning they saw little Molly's hair tied up with it.

The same thing was done the following night; and as before, Mit-luk came for her present, leaving the child asleep in her tent.

On the third evening, which was cloudy, they waited till it had grown dark, then went ashore with their stock of presents. This time, however, Addison left Sandy with Esther to make the distribution, and then rowed back a little way toward where the shallop lay at anchor. Afterward he came quietly round in the boat to a point nearer to Mit-luk's tent.

The dogs bothered him somewhat; but as these Husky dogs were always barking, no notice was taken of it by the natives, most of whom were now at Doo-tok's tent, farther along the beach. Addison drew up the boat, and then, going cautiously toward the foot of the crags where Mit-luk lived, concealed himself and waited.

Every move had been arranged in advance with Esther; and presently Addison heard the woman calling Mit-luk. Immediately Mit-luk looked out, and hearing her name called again, went hastily in the direction of her brother's tent.

As soon as she had disappeared Addison crept into the tent, and striking a match, at once discovered little Molly soundly asleep among the foxskins of the *til-wuk*. To gather her up, foxskins and all, was but the work of a moment; and when the child stirred in her sleep, he murmured the words, "Papa's come! Papa's come!" so endearingly that two little arms stole sleepily about his neck.

Leaving the tent in haste, he carried the child down to the boat and rowed off to the shallop without an alarm being given.

It had been agreed that Esther should detain Mit-luk as long as possible; and she succeeded in doing so for half an hour or more, till one of the Metis came ashore with the boat and gave a signal by whistling through his fingers. Sandy and Esther then

got away from the throng at Doo-tok's tent, and put off to the shallop.

The stratagem had succeeded. Little Molly was soundly asleep in Esther's berth, and it now remained only to get away. They had no more than reached the shallop, however, and made the boat fast, when a wild outcry was raised ashore, and echoed along the head of the cove. It was Mit-luk, rushing to and fro, shrieking, *"Ted-ba pee-ta-hunga! Koo-nee-wak ta-hunga!"* (She has gone! Koo-nee-wak is gone!)

It is impossible not to feel compassion for this poor savage woman, who had at least saved little Molly's life, and who loved her dearly. Yet under the strange, difficult circumstances no one can properly blame Addison for doing as he did. Every other means of getting possession of the child had failed him.

There was a little wind that night, presaging a storm. They made sail at once, while the tumult ashore was at its height; and under cover of the darkness the shallop left her anchorage, and moved slowly down the bay. Paddles were heard several times; a number of the natives appeared to be putting off in their kaiaks. Navigation in Mosquito Bay was so difficult by night that three or four miles below the Husky encampment McKay was compelled to anchor till daybreak; for they came near getting ashore on one of the islands.

They got under way again as soon as it was light; but meanwhile the Huskies had sighted the shallop, and immediately one of their walrus-hide umiaks was seen putting off, as if intending to pursue. The morning was cloudy, threatening rain or snow; but as the light grew, Addison could plainly distinguish Doo-tok, gun in hand, standing in the bow of the umiak. The Husky women usually row these large boats; besides the rowers, however, he could see eight or nine men aboard.

But the shallop was soon moving off faster than the

umiak could be rowed. It was at no time nearer than two miles, and probably soon turned back, for rain and sleet began falling, with fog on the water.

By ten o'clock that forenoon they were twenty miles down the bay, and concluded that they had seen the last of this Husky horde.

Addison and Esther meanwhile were experiencing certain difficulties in caring for little Molly. The child had waked that morning in great good humor, and hungry. She seemed quite healthy, although much in need of bathing, from a civilized point of view, and of clean clothes, which Esther was attempting to devise for her.

Nor did she appear in the least alarmed at her new surroundings. Addison and Esther, indeed, she had seen several times already. From some instinct of race, too, or else a vague recollection of her mother and father, she "took to" Addison at once, and seemed quite content to have him array her in the hasty little new garments which Esther contrived, in place of the small skin smock and leggings in which Mit-luk had dressed her.

An Eskimo child, indeed, has no change of clothing, but wears the suit its mother first makes for it until it is worn out or wholly outgrown. Of necessity such little ones go very dirty. Little Molly, however, took to warm water and the new woolen garments very naturally, with now and then a wondering or a questioning look into Addison's face. If he said, "*Ab*" (yes), and nodded, that was enough for her. From the very first she pinned her childish faith on him, seeming to know intuitively that he was her best friend.

They expected that she would call for Mit-luk, and perhaps cry for her at first; but she never did.

It was with her food, however, that they had most trouble. In the summer-time these Huskies feed on fish, seals, aquatic birds, fish-oil, goose-oil, and rarely

a few berries, somewhat like blueberries, from the barrens a little back from the seashore. When Addison offered her some thick oatmeal porridge, with sugar on it, the child seemed frightened at the first spoonful put into her mouth, and made haste to reject it. Her eyes opened very wide indeed, and she scanned Addison's face doubtfully. Perceiving, however, that he was himself eating it, she laughed, and consented to try it again, but ate very little—which was quite as well, perhaps, since some danger attended such a complete change of diet.

As the shallop cleared the islands of the upper portion of the bay, and encountered the swell of the broader lower expanse, the child was considerably affected by the motion, and became so miserable as to cry at times during the afternoon.

Toward evening that day they got down near the place where they had seen "Mister Kubelik" and his Labrador Eskimos; and as the weather was rather thick, McKay anchored in the lee of a craggy point on the north shore, which offered shelter from the northeast storm. It was a comfortable berth for the little craft, in three fathoms of water, and about half a cable's length offshore.

No natives were seen here that evening. Apparently none of them had sighted the shallop, and no effort was made to attract their attention. For two nights there had been little opportunity for any one to secure more than a brief nap; but as the shallop swung safely at her anchor, and they were now down in the country of the more civilized Huskies, every one on board "turned in" for a good night's rest.

Addison was roused from a sound sleep by hearing little Molly, at the far end of the low cabin, exclaim, "*Oo-oo, im-muk, im-muk!*" (Water, or wet.)

He thought that she was calling to Esther, whose bunk was near by, for water, as children sometimes do in the night, and so drowsed off again for a time.

A little later, however, he became aware that something or some one was moving past him in the narrow space, and again he heard the child say, "*Ooh, immuk!*" this time close beside him.

Was it possible that Esther was carrying little Molly on deck for a drink of water? But why had she not lighted the lantern which Sandy always kept hanging near his bunk, ready for use? It seemed very strange.

"Is that you, Esther?" he said.

There was no reply, but he felt some one brushing past, and heard suppressed breathing. With that he jumped up and reached out his hand. It came in contact with a wet, cold object, which, however, instantly drew away. The next moment he felt a sharp stab through his coat-sleeve, so sharp that he cried out involuntarily, then shouted:

"Who are you? What are you doing?"

Thereupon Sandy and Esther started up, crying out, "What's the matter here?"

But Addison had heard sounds as of hasty moccasined feet stumbling up the steps of the companionway to the deck. Well aware now that somebody was attempting to carry little Molly off, he sprang up the steps himself.

Hardly had he set foot on deck, however, when he heard a splash in the water alongside, followed by sharp cries, as of fear, from the child. Some person or animal had her, and was swimming toward the dark outline of the crags ashore.

By this time Sandy had lighted the lantern, and came rushing up the companionway, followed by Esther. The two Metis had also turned out from the fore-house, near the galley, where they had their bunks.

"What's this? What's going on?" McKay shouted.

"Man the boat!" Addison exclaimed. "Some of those Huskies have come aboard and stolen that child!

They are getting away with her!" For little Molly could be heard crying out every moment.

They put the boat over the side. Addison then seized the lantern, and McKay, stopping only for a shotgun which Esther handed him, followed, and they put off. A few strokes sufficed to bring them to the shore, which loomed darkly close at hand. There were slippery, shelving ledges here, but the two men jumped out and pulled the boat up.

Whoever had the child had got ashore some moments ahead of them. They still heard her crying, however, and holding the lantern over his head, Addison ran that way, McKay following close after him. It was frightfully rough there, huge rocks barring the way at every step, and but for the child's outcries, they would have lost the trail altogether. Her captor appeared to be climbing up among the crags, and from the sounds, seemed presently to have a fall; for little Molly cried out again sharply, as if hurt.

Addison rushed in that direction. Stones came rattling down. He was now close on the fugitive, and a moment later the lantern-light fell on a Husky, who had come to a standstill at a place where the overhang of the rocks made further progress impossible. A wild, tattooed face, with wet black hair about it, looked round at him.

It was Mit-luk! She had little Molly thrust partly into the big pouch at the back of her *parka*. As Addison climbed up nearer to her with the lantern, she snarled at him like a wild beast; and he saw that she had in her hand one of those copper knives which the Southampton Huskies fashion by beating out the nearly pure copper ore obtained from some deposit in that island. It was with this weapon, probably, that Mit-luk had given him the prick through the coat-sleeve.

Addison spoke to her, making use of such Eskimo words as he recalled, and attempted to calm her.

Sandy, too, who had come up behind him, cried, "*Yu-wot-cherro, Mit-luk!*" (You must stop, Mit-luk!)

The woman stood at bay, however, striking her knife at them with great swiftness and force. Setting down his gun, McKay now climbed up nearer, and while Addison kept the lantern steady, succeeded in seizing and disarming her. Addison then got the child away from her, and began retracing his steps to the boat, McKay keeping Mit-luk back. For now she seemed quite crazed with grief or rage, shrieking, sobbing, and screaming maledictions on McKay, then snatching up stones to hurl at him.

Although he was a strong, active young man, his utmost efforts were required to prevent her from killing or wounding him. She kept attacking him all the way down to the boat, and with such ferocity that he was at last on the point of shooting her. In fact, Addison had some difficulty in restraining him from doing so, for Mit-luk had hit him several times, and thoroughly roused his temper.

They reached the boat at last, and putting the still wet and sobbing child in it, Addison slid it into the water and got in, while Sandy held Mit-luk off.

At sight of the child in the boat, however, she grew even more furious. McKay was unable to get in himself without danger of her hitting little Molly with the stones she threw. Addison therefore put off to the shallop alone, and then, having given the child into Esther's arms, went back for Sandy, who had held Mit-luk at bay by main strength.

Even with Addison's hands free, they had all they could do to shake her off and get away in the boat. The woman proved almost incredibly strong, and she had passed into a frenzy of savage rage. She screamed and howled at them from the rocks; and for some moments they looked to see her jump into the water and swim off to the shallop again—a feat which she had already performed once that night.

Apparently Mit-luk had followed alongshore after the shallop for more than thirty miles, keeping it in sight, no doubt, for most of the time. It is likely that she had seen them anchor there the night before, but had waited till past midnight, after all was quiet and dark aboard, before swimming off to them.

Little Molly was very wet, and had suffered a number of bumps and bruises when Mit-luk had fallen with her among the rocks, but she was not seriously injured otherwise during her strange nocturnal experience.

Even after they were all back aboard the shallop, Mit-luk continued filling the night and all the barren shore with her wild lamentations. It was a long while before she ceased them. Addison sincerely hoped that she had gone away, and would return to her people.

But about the first object that met his eye when day dawned was Mit-luk, sitting there on the rocks, with her face in her hands, staring mutely off at the shallop. The first fierce outburst of her grief had passed, and now the poor creature was the picture of despair.

It made Addison feel so bad that he told McKay to get under way as quickly as possible. He thought that she would then go back to her tribe as soon as they were out of sight, and said as much to Esther. But the Cree woman shook her head.

"She will drown herself," said Esther. "These Husky women often do that when they lose a child they love. She will watch us go out of sight, and then jump into the sea."

By the time they had the anchor up, however, a new phase of the difficulty presented itself.

CHAPTER IV

THE morning after Mit-luk's mad attempt to kidnap little Molly,—which so nearly succeeded,—the shallop's anchor was being hauled up. Suddenly "Mister Kubelik" and his family of Labrador "Huskies" appeared, coming along the beach from their summer camping-place.

Mit-luk leaped up from the stone, where she had sat glowering at the shallop, and glanced about her in alarm. The approaching Huskies stopped short, probably recognizing the tattoo marks of their enemies on Mit-luk's face and arms.

Addison wondered what would follow; but the Cree woman, Esther, had no doubt as to that. "They will kill her!" she exclaimed. "There is blood between them."

Terror of her hereditary enemies, in fact, appeared to have seized the woman. She ran a few steps along the beach, toward the end of the craggy point, then as suddenly turned back, for in that direction the cliffs came sheer down to the water. Behind her, too, the rocks rose steep and high. To escape, she must pass close to the Huskies farther along the beach; and they were now pointing toward her with excited gestures and handling their weapons.

Bidding McKay drop his anchor again, Addison got into the boat, and rowing close in to the beach, called out to Mit-luk to come aboard.

The woman hesitated, being almost as much afraid of Addison as of the Huskies; but he continued speaking kindly to her, making use of such Eskimo words as he knew, and soon she came into the boat, and was taken aboard the shallop.

At first Sandy and his mother were very unwilling

to receive her. They were afraid to let her go into the cabin where the child was, and it seemed cruel to take her away from her home and country. Addison felt that they ought to put back up the bay and land her somewhere near her own people. When he counseled doing this, however, McKay strongly dissented. "This is the third of September," said he. "Heavy weather will soon be upon us."

"But it is eight hundred miles to Moose Factory!" Addison remonstrated. "How will this woman ever get back to her people?"

"She will have to take her chance of that," said McKay, coolly. "I will not risk my shallop in Mosquito Bay again this season. It is high time we were on our way south."

And, indeed, Addison was even more anxious not to lose time. The voyage to Moose Factory would occupy thirteen or fourteen days, perhaps longer. By October snow lies round James Bay; and there was still Moose River to ascend in a canoe, and the great wilderness to cross—with little Molly. Alone, he could hasten forward rapidly, and would not greatly mind snow. But how was he to carry and care for a child only two years old?

Sandy took Mit-luk's knife away from her. Esther searched her clothes for other weapons, and took away a large bone awl and several needles. Not daring to give her access to little Molly in her present frame of mind, they put her in the cuddy forward of the galley, where she was soon woefully seasick; for the shallop was now scudding over the swells at the entrance of Mosquito Bay.

In another hour they were fairly at sea on Hudson Bay again, and this time southward bound. None too soon. The rugged mountains of the "East Main" were already showing white in the northeast; and as Addison reflected on all that was before him, his anxieties increased.

At nine o'clock that morning a sail came in view, far on the southwestern horizon, and as they gradually drew nearer, it proved to be a large vessel, the fur company's ship, *Fitz-William,* Captain Tompkins, on its annual voyage from the company's posts in the bay, home to London by way of Hudson Strait.

As Addison stood watching the approach of this craft, a new idea suddenly presented itself to his mind. Might he not secure passage for himself and little Molly on this vessel to England, and thence return home to America by steamer? He determined to do so if a bargain could possibly be made. McKay informed him that these ships often carried passengers.

On their part, too, the young half-breed and his mother were quite willing for Addison to terminate his trip with them there, since the hundred and twenty pounds agreed on for their services and the use of the shallop for the season had been deposited at Moose Factory in advance.

This, with other expenses for canoes, goods and provisions, had reduced Addison's credit account of four hundred pounds with the Hudson Bay Company to about one hundred and seventy pounds. But he hoped this would be sufficient.

The course of the shallop was accordingly changed to intercept the approaching ship, and the Union Jack raised at half-mast. In response to this signal, the *Fitz-William* hove to. The shallop came under her lee, and Captain Tompkins hailed them, to demand who they were and what they wanted of him.

After giving the name of the shallop and other formal details, Addison appealed to the Englishman's sense of humanity. "Captain Tompkins, I greatly desire to secure passage to England with you for myself and a little white child whose parents have been murdered by the natives," he said.

"Are you an employé of the fur company?" Captain Tompkins demanded.

"No, sir," replied Addison. "But I have full credit with the fur company at Montreal. I came up here to get the child from the Eskimos, a child only two years old. I found her five days ago, and I have her on board this shallop. Captain, I hope that you will not refuse us passage home with you. It may be a matter of life or death for so young a child."

Captain Tompkins hesitated. "I don't know," he said, doubtfully. "I have five women passengers and their children already. My cabin accommodations are small. Well, I'll do it. It will be twenty pounds passage-money for each person."

"That is fully understood," replied Addison.

"Very well, then, come on board."

The transfer to the *Fitz-William* was effected in the shallop's boat. Esther brought up little Molly, and went with her to the ship. Molly behaved very well, laughing and extending her hands to some of the children on board, who stood peeping over the rail at them, as they came alongside.

In the haste of this new arrangement, Addison had for the moment well-nigh forgotten Mit-luk. With a sudden sense of responsibility, he remembered that she was shut up forward in the shallop, and would have to be left behind.

"Sandy," he exclaimed, turning to the young half-breed, "I will give you ten pounds extra to promise me you will get that Husky woman back to her people."

Sandy laughed. "Don't you worry about her," said he. "She will never bother you again—and you need not pay me anything, either."

There was a sinister note in this reply which caused Addison to recollect that Esther was an Indian and that her son had Indian blood in him. How would Mit-luk fare at their hands?

An instant only remained to him for decision. "Captain Tompkins," he said, "this white child with

me has an Eskimo nurse whom we cannot leave behind. I beg that you will take her, too."

"Zounds, sir, how many more?" grumbled the captain. "It will be twenty pounds additional," he added, shortly. "Sixty pounds for the three of you."

"Very good, sir; I so understand it," Addison replied. "The woman is on the shallop. I will fetch her off at once."

They rowed back, unlocked the cuddy, and hurrying the seasick Mit-luk into the boat, took her to the *Fitz-William.*

Addison then bade a hasty good-by to Sandy and Esther. The rudder creaked; the ship swung on her northward course again; and the little shallop, which had been his home for so many weeks, was soon a mere white speck on the waters receding southward.

But Mit-luk was still on his hands, bound for England with them! And in London—what could he do with her there? A helpless savage could not be turned adrift in a great city. Would he have to take her home to Maine with him? He winced at the thought of it.

The delight of this poor creature, however, when she had climbed to the deck and saw little Molly there, was touching. On the way to the ship she had seemed dazed, but on perceiving the child, she darted forward to her, crying, *"Ar-bo-nee! Ar-bo-nee!"* (Deary! Deary!) rubbing her tattooed face against little Molly's arms. Then she began biting each of her fingers in succession with soft little bites, holding them in her mouth like an affectionate and playful dog.

Addison turned away, strangely affected by the sight of these animal-like demonstrations. In truth, he felt very uncomfortable, for he saw the women among the passengers regarding him curiously.

These women were the wives of factors and fur-traders at Fort Churchill, Fort York, and other posts of the Hudson Bay Company.

Was it possible, Addison wondered, that these strangers could entertain the absurd idea that this Husky woman was his wife and little Molly her child?

He sought out Captain Tompkins and again explained the circumstances, asking him to set the matter right with his fellow passengers. At the midday meal in the cabin the captain introduced him to the five ladies and others on board. At considerable length Addison then related the story of little Molly and his long journey in quest of her.

But the incident was embarrassing as well as exasperating; and the situation was made worse when one of the ship's stewards brought Mit-luk in to a seat at the lower end of the table.

The food, the furniture, everything, indeed, was wholly new to her. She had never seen a table set with crockery before, and had never sat in a chair. When the broadly grinning steward attempted to seat her before her plate, she fell off the chair—to the vast amusement of the youngsters. Even the older people laughed, and noticing Addison's vexation, laughed again.

But although utterly ignorant of the ways of civilized life, Mit-luk was not lacking in temper and in pride—for was she not the sister of the *u-shu-muttok* of her tribe? In an instant she was up on her feet again, her dull black eyes snapping. With upraised hands beside her face and fingers crooked like talons, she screamed volleys of Eskimo execrations at those laughing, heartless white women, who, indeed, now recoiled in terror from so savage a termagant.

Addison had no small ado to calm her and get her away; and thereafter no attempt was made to have her come to the table.

Her joy in little Molly knew no bounds, however, and all that day she appeared to be wholly happy with the child. Molly herself did not now reciprocate Mit-luk's devotion. For some reason, race instinct,

perhaps, the child much preferred the company of Addison and of the other whites aboard the ship. By the next morning she had begun to flout her Eskimo foster-mother, and openly ran away from her to be with Addison and her new friends—at which Mit-luk sat gazing sadly after her.

It was pitiful; and several times Addison attempted to console her in such words as he knew of the Eskimo tongue. But each time the woman turned away resentfully. Very often now he found her crouched in some dark corner below, with her tattooed hands covering her face. He would have done well to watch her closely.

The *Fitz-William* was now in Hudson Strait, and for three days made way slowly eastward through the ice of that dangerous channel. From Mansfield Island, at the mouth of Hudson Bay, to the end of the strait at Cape Chidley, there are five hundred miles of the most difficult navigation known to English mariners. Often the entire passage is blocked; and on certain unfavorable years the company's ships have been unable to make their voyages.

During the fourth night the ship ceased wholly to make way; and on going out at daybreak, Addison found that they were amid ice-fields, with the snow-clad mountains of Ungava showing white to southward. During that day the southerly drift of the ice carried them down toward a low black cape of the mainland; and toward evening four Huskies came off to them on the closely packed ice-floes, to barter whalebone for tobacco and ammunition for their seal guns.

In accordance with the policy of the fur company, Captain Tompkins supplied them. They were not allowed to come on board, however, on account of their well-known propensity to pilfer small articles. Mit-luk was below, but it is possible that she heard the natives talking alongside.

The ship was now amid ice. The floes were opening and closing at times, showing cracks of open water.

Since coming aboard the *Fitz-William,* Addison had allowed Mit-luk to be with little Molly at night. And that night, after the child was asleep, Mit-luk wrapped her carefully in a blanket and put her into the capacious pouch or sack at the back of her *parka,* doing it all slowly and carefully, so as not to waken her.

After midnight, when all was quiet, she crept on deck with her burden, and reached the after-rail without being heard or seen by the watch.

It was very dark and foggy, but she knew there was solid ice alongside. A coil of two-inch warping-line, such as is used on these ships with ice-kedges, lay by the rail. She let one end of this line down the side till it touched, and then made it fast—and all this with so little noise as not to be heard by the sailor, walking to and fro, not fifty feet away.

While she was climbing over the high rail and swinging down by the line, however, little Molly suddenly waked in alarm.

The watch forward heard a child cry out sharply, and at once ran back aft with his lantern. Espying the turn of the line round the rail, and seeing it move, he thrust his light over the side, and caught sight of Mit-luk's upturned face just as she let go to jump to the ice. But there was a little open water and broken ice between the vessel and the floe. In the flurry of being discovered, she jumped and fell into the water, but caught on the edge of the firm ice with her hands. Molly struggled out of the pouch, and also fell into the water, screaming with terror.

"Below! Below there! Call the mate!" the sailor bellowed. "Turn out the watch!"

He was a Norseman, named Jansen, a good seaman, used to ice all his life. On hearing the child scream,

he thrust one arm through the ring of the lantern and went down the rope himself. With a kick against the side of the vessel and an outward swing, he landed on the firm floe, and turned to get the child out.

Mit-luk, meanwhile, had clambered out herself, and also turned, doubtless to rescue little Molly. But the Norseman had already pulled the child out. She had not sunk, owing to the buoyancy of her many wraps.

A singular contest now ensued. With a wild cry Mit-luk endeavored to take little Molly from Jansen; but the sailor, distrusting her intentions, pushed her roughly back. Screaming with rage or grief, she dashed at him again, attempting to snatch the child from his arms.

Half a dozen times the sailor thrust her back, shouting angrily to her to desist and let the child alone. Their voices blended in noisy altercation, for Mit-luk was now shrieking like a fury let loose. Little Molly, too, was filling the air with her cries of fear and discomfort.

The sailor's first shouts had waked Addison, and as soon as he found that Molly was gone, he rushed on deck. The mate, the captain, and most of the crew were there ahead of him, however; and three sailors were already down on the ice, attempting to secure Mit-luk, whom, on account of her screams, they all believed to be crazy. As they approached to seize her, she ran off out of sight, across the floes, wailing and sobbing.

Addison was at first chiefly concerned in ascertaining if little Molly were injured, and afterward, with the assistance of the stewardess, in changing the child's wet clothes.

When he went on deck again, the sailors and mate were still out on the ice, searching for Mit-luk, chasing her about with lanterns, but unable to get near her. They all came back after a time, much disgusted.

Addison could still hear her crying at a distance;

she was roaming about the ship on the floes. He called to her in Eskimo as persuasively as he could, but was unable to induce her to return.

Captain Tompkins and he then got down with a lantern, and proceeded in the direction where they had heard her last, hoping to reassure her and bring her back. But she saw the light and evaded them; and at last they gave it up and came back to the ship. The crevices and cracks between the floes were getting wider; it was dangerous passing from one to another.

At daylight Mit-luk had not come in. There was considerable fog, and they could not see her about the ship. Nothing further was ever learned as to her fate. Either she had gone off over the ice-fields toward the land which they had seen the previous day, or else, perhaps, had fallen into some open place and been drowned—a miserable and pathetic ending to an unhappy situation.

The wind had changed, and during the morning the southerly pressure of the ice relaxed. By noon the *Fitz-William* was enabled to get under way again, and proceeded on her voyage through the strait. That was the last of the ice. The following morning they saw the open Atlantic stretching away to the eastward.

CHAPTER V

THE fur company's ship *Fitz-William,* with Addison and little Molly aboard, was out thirty-six days on the voyage from Hudson Strait to England. It reached London on the morning of October 17th.

On landing, Addison proceeded immediately to the offices of the Hudson Bay Company, to adjust his accounts and get the balance of his credits in money; and from there he made haste to book passages for himself and the child by steamer from Liverpool home to America. They could sail, he learned, on the following day.

Fully aware that we must have grown very anxious over his protracted absence, he now bethought himself to send us a message by cable, and sought out an office of the Anglo-American Company. The charge was a dollar a word in those days, including the address; nor did any of the code words appear to cover what he desired to say. After some cogitation, he chose the words, "Child safe. Home soon. Addison," and paid eight dollars to have this message transmitted to Maine.

This done, he journeyed up to Liverpool with little Molly, and embarked on his voyage of eleven days to New York with a mind at ease concerning us, thinking that we would now be relieved of all further solicitude, and look for his return in the course of a fortnight.

As a matter of fact, however, the message never came. In these first years of the Atlantic cable there was often trouble in sending messages. At a place on the coast of Newfoundland, called Heart's Content,

I think, the anchor of a fishing-vessel had then temporarily deranged the shore end of the cable, and hence nothing like "heart's content" arrived for us through the little copper wire under the Atlantic.

In truth, the lost message would have been a boon to us at the old farm. October had been a month of ever-deepening anxiety. Not a word had come from our kinsman in the far north since his letter from Michipicoten, nearly six months before; nor had any trustworthy tidings concerning him reached the fur company's headquarters in Montreal by any of their couriers. Twice the old squire had gone to Montreal to inquire personally, and to interview the *attachés* and messengers of the company. He could learn only of a rumor that Addison had reached Moose Factory toward the last of May, and that he had gone north with a stock of goods in a small sailing vessel.

What the old gentleman feared was that he had been cast away in a gale on the bay or murdered by natives for the goods. Of this, however, he said little at home, for poor grandmother had already passed through all possible phases of anxiety, and had sunk to somber depths of self-reproach, lamenting bitterly that Addison had been allowed to go.

The last days of October were very cold, raw and cloudy, and toward night of the 31st it snowed—the first snow-storm of the season.

All day we had been hurrying about, doing the last of the autumn work, banking the barn cellars and battening all north windows for winter, protecting the wells, piling fir boughs round the old farmhouse, and setting a double row of "Christmas trees" in the frozen ground down the lane. There were the parsnip-beds, too, to be covered in the garden, the dahlia bulbs to dig, and the last of the apples, turnips, beets and potatoes to put in the cellar—preparing and making all snug and safe for our inclement Maine winter of six months.

It was snowing thick and fast before we finished all these chores that night, the fine, driven flakes rattling drearily down through the bare branches of the trees and on the mats of dead leaves beneath them.

It seemed good to get indoors, where the old sitting-room fireplace was bright, and see the cheerful lamplight and the girls setting the table, bringing in a good hot supper from the kitchen; but at best none of us felt very cheerful. The dull weight of suspense and hope deferred rested constantly on our spirits.

The old squire had already decided to go to Montreal again as soon as there was snow for snow-shoeing, and send two Canadian *coureurs* to Moose Factory, at our own expense, to make inquiries. Till then, however, we could do nothing more than had been done, and we young people tried to be as light-hearted as possible and keep what hopes we could.

At the supper-table we talked of school and Thanksgiving, Christmas and New-year's, General Grant's presidency, of the proposed Centennial Exposition—of everything, in fact, but the long-absent Addison and Molly's baby. Whenever Theodora or Ellen perceived that grandmother was about to revert to that topic, they deftly asked her some question that would divert her thoughts.

But grandmother, alas! had come to that sad pass of her grief where she thought it almost wrong to smile, and a desecration of our sorrow to joke. It was difficult keeping her mind off it even through one meal at table. I recollect that as the gusts of hard, icy snow swished against the windows, the old lady cast piteous glances that way; and well we knew what was in her mind. She was thinking of Addison, or of that child, away off somewhere in the bleak, cold north. And at last, in spite of all the girls' little devices, she burst out with her grief.

"Only to think," she cried, "only to think that one of us is off in this cold storm, with winter coming on

again, and not a word from him—not one word from him!"

The snow, I suppose, had made it all seem a little worse, for I remember that Ellen rose suddenly from the table, crying out, "Oh, don't, grandmother! Please don't speak of it again!" and ran out of the room.

Theodora, too, evinced little appetite, and our evening meal was ending rather dismally, despite every effort at cheerfulness, when a muffled sound of wheels and horses' hoofs was heard in the yard outside.

"Some one's come," I said, and bestirred myself to light a lantern and go out. We supposed that it might be a neighbor.

Then clear and loud we heard a strangely familiar whistle—the first bar of the reveille! It was an old trick of Addison's, when coming home late with the team, to summon Halse and me out with the light to help him unharness. He had a knack of whistling those notes very loud; one could hear him a long distance off.

It would be quite impossible to try to describe in mere words the effect that familiar whistle produced on us that night! We knew it was Addison the instant we heard it, and we all jumped to our feet, regardless of crockery, food, or the table itself, which, indeed, the old squire nearly overturned, dishes and all! But no one stopped or cared.

"It's he! It's Ad! He's come!" Ellen cried, her voice rising to a shrill scream. Theodora burst out wildly laughing, then began to sob. Grandmother, too, sprang up, but fell back in her chair, trembling, crying, and praying aloud.

The rest of us, however, had made a frantic rush out on the porch, nearly running over each other in the doorway.

The dim outline of a team was distinguishable in

the whirling snow and darkness outside, and a well-remembered voice shouted, "Hello, everybody! Hello, Nell! Hello, Doad! How do you do, grandfather! How are you, boys!"

"O Ad, is it really you?" cried Theodora, actually sobbing for joy; and Ellen, too, cried, "O Ad! Oh! Oh!"

"Why, of course it's I!" he exclaimed. "Didn't you look for me?" and he came bounding up the steps with a child in his arms, wrapped in a big woolly red cloak, with white fur wrapped over head and ears, save her little ruddy, wondering face, which was surveying us, round-eyed, amid the snowflakes. "And here," he exclaimed, "is a little Husky girl, all the way from Hudson Bay! This is Koo-nee-wak."

But Nell and Theodora had now flung themselves on him; and he was trying to hug them both with one arm, while the little wondering face stared at them. We two boys had also to thump him on the back, and shout, "Good for you, Ad!" And the old squire seized him in turn by his disengaged hand, crying, "My boy! My boy!"

And grandmother, who had reached the door by this time, kissed him on both cheeks, murmuring, "Thank God! Thank God! He's come! He's risen from the dead!"

So altogether it was some moments before he could get into the house. Yet all the while the girls and grandmother were exclaiming, "Come in! Come in! Fetch the dear little thing in! Don't keep her out there in the cold!"

"Oh, she doesn't mind cold!" Addison exclaimed. "She's like a little polar bear. She was born in the cold, and is used to ice. She has been too warm in the cars all the way from New York, haven't you, Molly deary?" And a little voice promptly cried, "*Ah!*"

"That's yes," explained Addison, as he strode into

the old sitting-room with his lively young burden. "I haven't got her fully taught English yet. That's Eskimo, you know. She is a little Eskimo girl, aren't you, Molly?" But the child as promptly said no to that.

He stood her on the table and glanced round the room. "Oh, but doesn't it look natural here? Same old place! My, but it's good to get back and see you all again!" he cried. "Seems as if I had been gone years and years!"

"And so it seems to all of us, Ad!" exclaimed Theodora. "And, oh, we are so glad to see you back!"

But grandmother was saying, "Let me see her. Unwrap her, girls, and let me see her. Fetch me my spectacles, Halstead. I want to see that child."

Ellen and Theodora were unclasping the red cloak, and Addison had turned to help them do it. "For you may not understand those clasps," said he. "They are English, you know. I bought that rig in London."

"London? London?" exclaimed the old squire. "Have you been in London?"

"Why, yes, sir. Didn't you get my message by cable?" Addison suddenly asked.

"Cable? No!" we all exclaimed, wondering.

"And you didn't know I was coming?" Addison cried.

"Never a word till we heard you whistle outside," said Ellen. "Why, Ad, we have heard nothing at all!"

"Well, that's very strange!" Addison exclaimed. "I went from Hudson Bay in one of the fur company's ships to London, instead of coming back by way of James Bay and Moose River; and I cabled you from England, on October 17th, that I had found little Molly and was on my way home. And you never got that?"

"We certainly never did," replied Theodora.

"There went eight dollars for nothing, then," said Addison. "And what with clothes and all to buy for little Molly and myself, I was mighty short of money, too!"

"Never mind. Never mind, my boy!" the old squire exclaimed, laughing for pure joy. "We've too much to be thankful for to waste any thoughts over cables that don't work."

By this time the girls had little Molly unwrapped, and had shaken out her tangled red-gold hair, and freshened up the little frock and ribbons with which Addison had bedecked her for the home-coming. The child laughed and gave her head a little toss; and we all stood there for one whole long minute in silence, regarding her with reminiscent eyes, seeing her mother again in this little waif from the far north—the same droll, sportive turn of the lips, the same ready laugh, the same red-gold hair, the same full brow and wide-apart gray eyes, and even a few of the same little freckles under them.

"Ah, my child, my poor, dear child!" grandmother cried, thinking of that older Molly rather than of this little one; then she suddenly hastened away to her own room for a time, to compose her thoughts and give silent thanks to Heaven.

The old squire, too, had stood regarding the child with a gaze suddenly sad; for Molly had been a great favorite with him, often accompanying him on his drives about the town, when he was one of the selectmen.

"That's Molly's baby fast enough," he said to Addison. "There's no doubt as to that!" and he, too, took a turn out on the piazza, to control the emotions which the sight of this little Molly stirred.

The child felt the strangeness of our glances. She cast several little inquiring looks at Addison, to see if it was all quite proper; and he laughed, nodded to her, and said, "*Tweppee pik-kak.*" (All right.)

"But aren't you half-starved?" Ellen exclaimed, suddenly. "You must be famished, driving all the way from the station in the cold and storm!"

"What shall we say, Molly? Are you hungry? *Kappee-me-wanga-kun-nik?*" (Literally, Do we want something in our mouths?)

"*Ah, ah!*" cried the child. "Yeth!" she added, correcting herself in English, so that there need be no mistake on that account.

Laughing heartily, the girls betook themselves to the kitchen and made haste to get another supper. Grandmother came out to add a few touches and bring forth from her most intimate cupboard several choice jars of preserves; while Halse and I brought gillyflower apples from the cellar, and drew a pitcherful of our best cider. The best the house afforded was not half good enough that night for the hero from the north and this little newly arrived member of the family.

We all sat up to table again with them, for joy had come back, and with it fresh appetite. One would not now have known us for the dejected circle of an hour before! Grandmother looked twenty years younger; and when Addison came round and gave her a kiss, and put little Molly on three cushions in a chair next to her, the old lady's happiness appeared quite complete.

"I could die content to-night!" she sighed.

"Die!" cried Addison. "Who said die? Why, grandmother, you've got little Molly to bring up yet, and make a fine woman of her! That will take you a good twenty-five years!"

"The Lord helping me, I'll do it!" grandmother exclaimed, with new resolution in her voice. Life and its proper joys were coming back to her.

On their way home Addison had been attempting to teach little Molly to eat with a spoon and fork, instead of with her fingers and her lips down in a

platter, like the Eskimos. But the little dish of strawberry preserves which Theodora gave her tasted too good to be slowly and painfully spooned. Down went her little mouth into it. Then seeing Addison looking at her, she stopped short, suddenly remembering.

He put his hand over his eyes, as if much mortified. For a moment she regarded him without a word, sitting quite still. Then, with a loud cry, she slid down off the cushions, and running round to his chair, hid her head in his lap, sobbing, *"Na-mik! Na-mik! Eigh! Eigh!"* Then recalling her English words with a great effort, she cried, "Mollee fordot! Mollee fordot poon!"

Addison took her up and consoled her, for it was plain that the child worshiped him.

"She has the same high sense of honor that her mother used to have," he said aside to us. "She is very conscientious."

Indeed, it was some time before we could coax her back to her delightful strawberries again, and then she most carefully grasped the spoon.

Accidentally, for she was shaking with amusement, Ellen now pulled a saucer off the table, which broke as it fell. Little Molly looked down, and seeing the pieces, cried out, *"Ut, nuppy-yuk!"* (All broken!)

One can have little idea how odd this strange "Husky" language sounded, coming from the lips of this child. We sat and laughed immoderately—the more easily that night, perhaps, because we had done so little hearty laughing for months.

During the six weeks and more at sea, with Addison and others who spoke English, little Molly had learned a great many English words and sentences, which she used nearly as well as any child of that age. But the Eskimo words still came handiest to her tongue. If we asked her any question suddenly, which she did not quite understand, she would say,

"*Su-aaah?*" (What?) prolonging the last syllable in so droll a manner as always to make us laugh.

Another queer word which she often used was "*Hu-oke?*" (Why?) if she wanted to know the reason for anything that was said to her; and it was a long time before she wholly gave up saying *kylee-kylee* for come. Sometimes, too, we would hear her humming a monotonous little song, or chant, which Mit-luk had probably taught her, the same low note being repeated over and over.

Naturally we were all very curious to learn how Addison had happened to go to England, and how and where he had found little Molly. And sitting there at the supper-table, he began telling us all about it, from the time he left Michipicoten, and about Molly's grave at the "Jaws" of the Great Whale River, and the strange little summer village of the wild Eskimos from Southampton Island, and finally the sad story of poor Mit-luk—the one dark, regrettable incident of little Molly's rescue.

Of that, indeed, Addison never liked to speak at much length. I think that he always reproached himself to some extent for not having exercised better judgment in dealing with Mit-luk, although it is difficult to see how he could have acted differently or more wisely.

It was such a long and, to us, intensely interesting narrative that the evening sped by unheeded. Eight, nine and ten o'clock struck unnoticed. Theodora and grandmother, indeed, bethought themselves several times to ask if little Molly were not sleepy, and ought not to be put to bed; but the child, with a glance round, said, "*Na-mik! na-mik!*" each time.

At last Addison brought her chair and cushions round next his own, where she could nestle up a little closer to him; and she kept broad awake, as he talked, till after nine. Once, while telling us how the Eskimo woman had crept aboard the shallop in the night, he

stopped, and looking down, said, "Molly, where's Mit-luk?"

For a moment she looked thoughtful, then shook her head very solemnly, and said, "*Mit-luk o-nay.*" (Mit-luk gone.)

Before ten, however, sleepiness began to overpower her. Addison placed one of the cushions on his lap for her head, and long before he had finished the account of his journey and voyage little Molly was sound asleep close to her protector. Theodora desired to wrap a blanket about her; but Addison said no, she would be too warm.

"You've no idea," he continued, "how different the climate is down here, even in winter, and how much this child has suffered from artificial heat since we left Hudson Strait. Why, she was all right and comfortable up there in zero weather with no fire!"

He shifted the cushion gently under the little tired head, and laughed somewhat sheepishly as a chubby little fist began feeling round sleepily to find its way into his hand.

"You make up a small cot for her, Doad, in my room to-night," he said. "For it is a strange place to her, and she may wake up in the night and feel frightened if I am not near to answer her.

"But to-morrow I am going to turn her over to you girls and grandmother," he continued. "I have been nurse for some time and done the best I could, because I had to, and because I love the child. But it isn't a proper business for a man, anyhow, when there are women about."

It was thus, under such strange, sad circumstances, that little Molly came home to the old farm and began life with us there as a member of the family.

Of the nineteen hundred and fifty dollars placed to his credit in Montreal the April before, Addison reached home with barely seven in his pocket—but he had found Molly's baby.

And here my present story properly ends, yet it had a singular sequel.

Nearly a year later a wayworn package, wrapped in native-tanned seal hide, reached us by the way of England. It had been sent to Addison from Hudson Bay by Sandy McKay and his mother, "Esther," the contents having been obtained from a party of Huskies with whom the McKays traded during the summer following Addison's quest.

It proved a truly pathetic packet; for on being opened, it was found to contain a little, much-soiled, half-burned copy of the New Testament, on the fly-leaf of which could still be made out the name of Mary T. Linscott; a crumpled belt buckle, three buttons, half a pair of scissors that had been in the fire, and also another scorched little book, which, when deciphered, proved to be a diary that Molly had kept for the last three or four years of her life.

All the latter portion of it was charred and torn away, but there remain thirty pages in Molly's remembered handwriting, describing her first voyage to the Pacific arctic, with the loss of their vessel in the ice and their escape southward.

These relics are now our only mementoes of little Molly's mother.

PART THIRD

A LITTLE HEROINE OF THE SEAS

CHAPTER I

"WHAT became of Molly's baby?" has been asked by so many readers of *The Youth's Companion* (in which this account first appeared) that I shall try to answer the question. In truth I would have answered it long ago except for having to send to Honolulu to get the particulars of her subsequent history. At last the information has come, and moreover the permission to use it.

As will probably be remembered, Molly's baby was the little orphan girl whom my cousin Addison rescued from among the Eskimos and brought home to the old farm in Maine after her mother—Molly Linscott—had lost her life in such painful circumstances at the "Jaws" of the Great Whale River in the Hudson Bay region.

Molly Linscott was that fine, great-hearted cousin of ours who five years before had come home to the old squire's with Theodora and me after our memorable trip to Uncle Dresser's funeral. Uncle Dresser had left his property to Molly,—his granddaughter,—who had taken care of him; but his brothers were trying to break the will. Afterwards Molly lived with us three years until her marriage to Herbert Linscott, the youthful captain of a whaler that was about to

make a two years' voyage to Hudson Bay. Little Molly was born up there in the north during the voyage.

The Linscotts were an old whaling family of New England, who fitted out at New Bedford, Nantucket or Sag Harbor, generally for the Pacific and Arctic oceans. But after the memorable disaster of 1871 to the whaling fleet in the Arctic young Capt. Herbert Linscott had resolved to try a trip to Hudson Bay—an ill-starred voyage indeed, since it resulted not only in the loss of his vessel but in that of Molly's life and his own.

Never shall I forget the joy that prevailed at the old squire's when Addison finally came home bringing little Molly with him. Grandmother Ruth and the girls alternately laughed and cried over her, for she had her mother's abundant, rich auburn hair and the same broad forehead and wide-apart eyes—only, instead of gray eyes like Molly's, she had eyes of a dark hazel like her father's.

Molly was with us at the old farm for five years; the picture here given of her was taken when she was nearly six years old, after Grandmother Ruth had dressed her to go to the village photographer's, curled her hair in old-fashioned ringlets, and put that quaint string of beads round her neck. I think, too, that the dear old lady must have impressed that demure look on the child's usually laughing face in honor of the occasion. Little Molly was then rather plump and short, but afterwards grew quite tall and strong.

From the time she was three years old she seemed to me to be constantly singing as she ran about the old farm. Instead of "little snowbird" we came to call her "little singing bird." She had unusual musical talent. I never saw a child with so tender a heart. Her sympathy for those who suffered was unbounded; there was nothing she would not do to comfort them. But if any danger arose, she was brave as a soldier. Once one evening in the winter

LITTLE SNOWBIRD
WHEN IN HER SIXTH YEAR

after grandmother had retired for the night the sitting-room chimney burned out; blazing cinders fell on the roof, the shingles of which took fire, and for a few minutes—till Halstead climbed up with a bucket of water—there was danger that the old farmhouse would burn. Was little Molly terrified? Not a bit of it. Her first thought was for grandmother. She sped to the old lady's room. "Dwess twick, gwam!" she cried and, fetching her gown and shoes, caught up her precious workbasket, to save that.

Addison was Molly's particular idol. That was only natural, I suppose, since he had found her up in the far north and had cared for her week after week on their long voyage home from Hudson Bay. He was now at Cambridge, but used to send her little letters every week or so. The child quite lived in anticipation of those letters and of his home-coming at vacation. "Will Naddy tum next week?" she usually asked us all every day or two; and throughout the autumn she was thoughtfully saving up mellow apples and plums for him and especially a box of honey from the beehives.

Once, to tease her, Halstead said at the supper table, "Ad doesn't care a snap for you, Molly." She sat very still for a time, then slipped from her chair and, going round to grandmother, hid her face and burst out crying. Theodora had no small ado to disabuse her mind of that terrible thought. The old squire, I recollect, spoke very sharply to Halstead.

Molly became much attached to Theodora and Ellen too, and they, in turn, loved her dearly; she seemed to be a child without a single bad quality! After Theodora had gone West to teach the Indian girls' school at St. John's Mission in South Dakota, and later, when Ellen had married and gone to North Dakota to live, I suppose little Molly felt somewhat lonesome at the old farm. I remember that she roamed round a great deal. She was, indeed, a born

roamer and dearly loved to set off on any sort of long excursion where new sights were to be seen—a trait inherited perhaps from her seagoing folk.

When at last Ellen came home on a visit from the West and was with us for a month the child grew very fond of her again, and when Ellen went, she wanted to go home with her. I have always half believed that Nell fostered the idea and drew alluring pictures of life in the West. Both the old squire and grandmother had all along expected that little Molly would make her home with us; and so had Addison, though he was now employed as a mining expert and seldom came home. Little Molly wanted to go home with Ellen so much, however, that the old squire consented to let her go—for a year.

I had no idea the old farmhouse could be so lonely as it seemed after they left us; and poor grandmother, I am sure, felt even more lonely than the old squire and I felt. For two or three weeks it was downright dismal there! All the sunshine seemed to have left us; and when at last Addison came home he fairly raged over it. Nell afterwards told me that he wrote her "an awful letter" about it.

Still we thought then Molly would be gone only a year, which would soon pass. But, alas, it proved a far longer visit.

Some months after Ellen had returned to Dakota Capt. John Linscott and his wife visited her. The whole family of Linscotts were then living in San Francisco and making whaling voyages to the North Pacific. Captain John was three-fourths owner of the brig *Caleb Norcross* and after transferring his business from Sag Harbor to San Francisco had been unusually prosperous. He was a likable man of a merry disposition. Little Molly took a great fancy to him, as well as to Aunt Ophelia, his wife, who was a quiet, doll-like little woman and very nearsighted. Captain John, it will be remembered, was Molly's

father's older brother and her own uncle. The Linscotts were, indeed, much nearer related to Molly than our folks at the old farm in Maine were.

So Molly went to San Francisco. Ellen was so mortified—perhaps, too, a little conscience-stricken—that she did not write to tell us the news for nearly two months. Her tardy letter was the first we knew of Molly's going from Dakota. It gave us all a shock, grandmother in particular. "I shall never see her again!" the old lady exclaimed and sat down and cried. San Francisco was a long way off in those days; and in point of fact Grandmother Ruth never did see little Molly again. As for Addison, when he came home he felt woefully bereaved and more indignant than ever with Nell.

That was almost the last of little Molly for us at the old farm. The Linscotts did not often write to us; and a child's mind is soon diverted by new surroundings. Besides, they went off on a voyage to Bering Sea the following spring and took Molly with them. It seemed destined that, like her mother, the child should "follow the seas," as our old New England people quaintly expressed it.

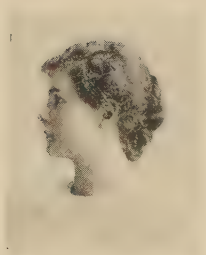
On the Linscotts' return to port in November, however, they sent Molly to school and gave her every opportunity for musical instruction that San Francisco afforded. I may add here that Addison and the old squire had intended to have her taught at the Conservatory of Music in Boston and afterwards to send her to study music abroad. Addison never ceased to fret over his disappointment in that matter. For a year or two he was threatening at times to go to San Francisco and take Molly away from the Linscotts. "Didn't I spend a whole year searching for her up north?" he was wont to exclaim. "Didn't I fetch her home? If I hadn't, she would be up there now, living among the Huskies!" The strangely pathetic circumstances that surrounded his finding her

after her mother's death had greatly endeared her to him. Except that he was so fully engrossed in his new profession I think he would have gone as he threatened. What would have happened in San Francisco, if he had gone, I am sure I don't know, but I rather think that little Molly would have come home with him. She quite worshiped "Naddy."

We heard from her infrequently during the next five or six years. She was at school, she was studying music, she took part in certain public musicales in San Francisco. They sent us her photograph as she looked on the eve of one of those entertainments. It was a side view and gave us no very good idea of her; but I reproduce it here.

She also went on another whaling voyage with Captain Linscott and his wife, this time to the Arctic by way of Bering Strait. Whalers had now begun to go to the Arctic again. After the great disasters to the whaling fleet in the seventies, whaling in that ocean was for ten years almost wholly given up as being too hazardous. But by 1887 certain bold spirits in the business began to venture up there again and found whales in plenty. Among them was Captain Linscott in the old *Caleb Norcross,* and Aunt Ophelia and little Molly accompanied him. He made a remarkably good voyage that first year. During August and September the ice remained offshore. There was open water from Cape Lisburne northward around Point Barrow. Whales were almost constantly in sight, and their "singing" was heard every day. During the voyage northward four hundred and eighty-five barrels of sperm oil were made, and later in the Arctic thirteen hundred and eleven barrels of whale oil. Fourteen thousand and ninety pounds of whalebone were obtained. At the prices then prevailing the trip netted the Linscotts more than a hundred thousand dollars.

Molly, who was now in her sixteenth year, appeared



MOLLY LINSCOTT
WHEN ABOUT SIXTEEN

to have become an enthusiastic whaler and was her Uncle John's "right-hand man." She kept his accounts, wrote up the log book, looked after supplies and helped generally. She and Aunt Ophelia had a cabin and dining room well fitted up aboard the old brig; by that time, too, both of them were inured to the discomforts of the sea.

The Linscotts did so well that season that they were encouraged to make a second venture and the next spring outfitted to go north again. In place of the old harpoons, hempen lines and lances formerly used the *Norcross* was equipped with a steam launch and a bomb gun for shooting whales and also steel cables and many other of the more modern appliances of whale hunting.

The brig reached its former whaling grounds to the northeast of Cape Lisburne on August 17th, and for two weeks they had even better success than they had had during the previous year. They laid in fully two thousand barrels of oil and a large quantity of bone. Three other whalers that had gone north that year, the *Chimborazo,* the *William Crane* and the *Golden Eagle,* were whaling near them and reported equally good success.

But such fine fortune was quite too good to last in the Arctic. It seemed as if that capricious ocean had merely been luring the whalers back in order to entrap them again.

In the Arctic, along the north coast of Alaska from Icy Cape up past Point Barrow and thence on eastward as far as Demarcation Point, Herschel Island and the delta of the Mackenzie, there are always vast ice floes, fields of floating ice, that in summer move back from the coast and leave a belt of open water several miles wide all along the shore. It is in that open water that whales have been found in such numbers that four thousand have been taken in a single season.

By the last of September, however, northerly gales begin to drive the ice fields down upon the coast again. The whaling season is therefore short there. Early in August the whalers were wont to make their way northward, past Cape Lisburne, to enter this magic belt of open sea and make their season's catch in the course of the next few weeks, and then to steal away before the ice cut off their escape. Sometimes for several summers they were able to accomplish the feat and get away richly laden with oil and whalebone. Then would come a season, as in 1871 and 1876, when the fateful ice came driving back earlier than usual and caught them suddenly as if in a vise. Nothing would then remain except to abandon their vessels and escape as best they could, generally in whale ships that had not ventured north of Icy Cape.

In the great disaster of 1871 more than thirty whalers—ships, barks and brigs—with their cargoes of oil and bone, valued at several millions of dollars, were abandoned by their crews, left to their fate in the on-coming Arctic winter, and either crushed in the ice or despoiled and burned by the Innuit (Eskimos) of that coast, who look upon a disaster to the whalemen as a godsend.

In 1871 the crews escaped after many hardships; but in 1876 there was pitiable suffering and loss of life. One sailor who resolved to remain up there and winter on board his ship was rescued the following year and gave a graphic account of the destruction of the vessels and of the ill-treatment he had received from the natives, who were twice on the point of putting him to death.

Besides the three whalers already mentioned that accompanied the *Caleb Norcross* in 1888,—the year of our present narrative,—there were two others, the *Winona* and the *George Hyde,* that went no farther north than Point Belcher and the head of "the great lagoon," thirty miles or so below Point Barrow.

But the *Norcross* got the most of its catch in the open water just off Cape Halkett, perhaps sixty miles to eastward of the last-named point, which is the land farthest north on that coast. After passing Point Barrow, the shore stretches southeasterly again to Demarcation Point, where Dominion territory begins. A good map of Alaska will help the reader to follow what occurred. The writer has never been on the Alaskan coast himself. What follows is in part the information and details sent him from Honolulu.

On the last day of August the whalers were lying moored to the edge of the ice fields from five to eight miles offshore and from one to three miles apart. Here and there whales were breaking water and blowing. Not less than a dozen boats were out chasing them, making fresh captures, while aboard all the ships the business of cutting in and boiling down was being rushed as fast as possible.

The *Norcross* carried a crew of twenty-one sailors besides Mr. Sanders, the mate, and a Chinese cook they called "Sam." Several of the men were Kanakas from the South Pacific islands; there were also one or more Japanese. The other whalers were manned by similar crews, the best that could then be hired at San Francisco.

Every ship had now one or more dead whales chained up alongside. "Spades" were plied and blocks rattled as huge "blankets" of blubber were cleaved from the carcasses and swung inboard. Under the great try-kettles fires were crackling merrily, and the smoke was rising high into the misty heavens; streams of hot oil were pouring into the cooler, ready for the casks below. Farther aft long slabs of stringy whalebone, or baleen, were being laboriously pried from the wide-propped jaws of the defunct monsters. Whalebone was then worth three dollars a pound; and one right whale's head would often furnish a thousand weight of it.

Little bidarkas, each paddled by a native, and here and there a bidar in which were a dozen broadly-grinning women, were constantly coming off to the ships to beg for the surplus whale meat after the blubber was removed, or paddling slowly back ashore heavily loaded with the reeking flesh. It was a busy, a barbaric, scene; supervising it all was Captain John, striding fore and aft, shouting his orders, and little Molly was running to and fro, here and there and all about, to assist him. For this was the rush time, those few precious weeks of the Arctic season.

Ten days more of such good luck and the venturesome whale hunters would slip out past lonely Point Barrow, scud down by towering Cape Lisburne, clear the foggy strait and then set sail for Frisco and home!

Ten more days if their luck held—but that treacherous sea had still to be reckoned with!

CHAPTER II

ON the 2d of September four whale ships were lying moored to the ice floes beyond Point Barrow, in the Arctic Ocean; among them was the *Caleb Norcross* with our friends the Linscotts. Judging by the experience of previous years, they thought that they could count on having ten days more of favorable weather before the season "broke." Whaling, flensing and boiling down went on with feverish haste; night and day the great try-kettles seethed and sent their odors up to the misty skies. Great heaps of blubber lay piled along the decks; tiers of it were stacked on the ice near by. In truth, there was more than enough blubber and bone. And during the next four days the *Norcross* bombed three more big "bowhead" whales.

On the night of the sixth, however, a northeast gale with flurries of snow set in and increased in violence throughout the entire following day. Shortly after noon of the seventh the ice fields began slowly to move toward the shore and to carry the vessels with them. The movement of the ice continued throughout the afternoon and the early part of the night. Thick weather with mist and sleet prevailed. On the morning of the eighth the *Norcross* was in plain sight of the beach, which was scarcely more than two cable lengths distant. The heavy ice floes had grounded in from three to four fathoms of water, and there was no immediate danger of the vessels' being forced ashore; but all four whalers were confined to a narrow belt of water that extended up and down the coast and that was partly filled with small floating cakes of ice.

Since the gale had spent itself, the whalers thought that within a few days the wind might shift to the south and press the ice fields back. Captain Linscott went by boat to confer with Captain Holcomb of the *Golden Eagle,* which was lying perhaps a mile away; and the two sought the opinion of Captain Baker of the *Chimborazo.* All three captains hoped for a change of wind and agreed to avail themselves of the first opportunity that presented itself to work up past Point Barrow.

Meanwhile the boiling down and the "boning" continued, and the men shot and secured several small whales that appeared in the open water near the *Norcross.*

Bidarkas from a native hamlet ashore were still coming off to the vessels. Most of the Innuit at Point Barrow were friendly with the whalemen, much more friendly indeed than the natives who lived farther along the coast to the east. The Innuit knew many words of English. Seeing Molly looking over the rail, one of the youngsters came paddling under the stern and, looking up, cried, "How do, white girl."

Molly replied, "How do, Husky."

Whereupon the boy pointed to the ice floes and cried, "You no go home."

During the three days that followed certain natives advised the whalers with much friendliness to go away as soon as possible; the ice, they said, would not recede from the shore again that season. But the whalers only laughed and went about their tasks.

The expected southerly wind did not come; and on the tenth of the month Captain Linscott sent Sanders up the coast in the launch to see whether they could get the ships out past Point Barrow. That evening Sanders reported unfavorably; he said that small boats would be able to pass round the cape, but that the ice there was too close to land for vessels to pass

between. Every one was now uneasy and hoped more fervently for the southerly gale.

But on the thirteenth snow and sleet set in from the north and pressed the ice still more heavily against the coast. Though the belt of open water near the shore did not close, for the floes already had grounded, numerous cakes of ice broke free and floated about. And with the snow and sleet had come colder weather. Something much akin to panic gripped the crews of the beleaguered vessels. Grim stories of starvation and death and of ships crushed in the ice went the rounds. The sailors were of many nationalities, and some of them were bad characters. They demanded that the officers provision and lower the whaleboats so that they could escape along the open water round Point Barrow and so down past Icy Cape, where they believed that the *Winona* and the *George Hyde* were still lying. Partly by persuasion and partly by authority Captain Linscott prevailed on his crew to wait a few days longer. He already had sent Sanders in the launch to make sure that the two whalers were still near and to request that they remain near by, ready to help in case the ships farther north had to be abandoned.

All of the next day the wind was northeast again, and snow fell heavily. But the men continued to try oil; they even killed a small "bowhead" that rose close to the vessel; apparently it had come from under the ice field. The four whalers were now lying at no great distance apart, and the next day the captains held another consultation. The crews of the *Chimborazo* and the *William Crane* were on the verge of mutiny.

Sanders did not return until the morning of the twenty-fourth; he had found the *Winona* and the *Hyde,* the captains of which had offered to receive the refugee crews and had agreed, though reluctantly, to wait another week for them below Cape Lisburne.

On receiving the news, the captains ordered the signal to abandon ship to be hoisted at the mastheads; then the men prepared the boats for the arduous voyage of almost a hundred miles along the coast to the waiting ships. Probably the plan was as good as any; at any rate the crews would not have remained inactive much longer.

But not every one was to go; Captain Linscott had decided to remain on his ship. He was three-fourths owner of the *Norcross* and had more than a hundred thousand dollars' worth of oil and bone below decks. He determined to send his wife and Molly in the launch down to the *Winona* and so home; he himself had hopes of saving the ship. To avoid painful scenes of leave-taking he said nothing of his plan to any one except Sanders, to whom he made a liberal offer to remain with him. After a few minutes of hesitation the mate accepted. Then in private he talked with Sam, the Chinese cook, and induced him to remain also. Of course the ship would soon freeze in; but Captain Linscott believed that two resolute men could winter aboard her and, with the aid of a small crew that they might pick up from whalers coming north the following summer, could take her out the next season. The experience would be tedious, but there were sufficient provisions, and Captain Linscott was not lacking in courage.

At daylight the next morning the boats put off under a lowering sky in a bitterly cold wind. It was a dismal moment. Besides Molly and Aunt Ophelia there were two other women and also a boy six years old, the little son of Captain Holcomb. To all of them the ships had been like home, with warmth and many other comforts; yet they dared not remain. According to the plan every vessel except the *Norcross* was to be wholly abandoned. As yet no one except Sanders and the Chinaman knew of Captain Linscott's purpose. As a matter of fact, however,

one obstinate sailor, William Barkins, secreted himself aboard the *Chimborazo* and did not take his place in the boats. The man had had trouble with his shipmates and appeared to prefer solitude to their company; there is little doubt that he had no idea what an Arctic winter would be like.

Three whaleboats from the *Norcross* had been lowered for the crew, and because of the floating ice Sanders was preparing to take them in tow so far as practicable. On account of the warmth of the engine Mrs. Linscott and Molly were assigned places in the power boat. One after another the boats were brought to the foot of the ladder; then all took their places. Fifteen boats from the other vessels had already set forth.

Captain Linscott and Sanders had agreed that Sanders should see the *Norcross* boats safely down to the refuge ships and then should return alone. But to foster the deception Captain Linscott came down the ladder and took his place in the launch; but a moment or two after they had started he exclaimed to Sanders that he had forgotten his chronometer and must go back for it. Accordingly Sanders backed water to the foot of the ladder—a rather difficult manœuvre on account of the large ice cakes that occupied the passage. The captain climbed aboard and started to go below; but, returning to the rail a few moments later, he said quietly, "Go ahead, Mr. Sanders. You can come back for me later." And Sanders at once started the engine.

For the moment no one suspected the ruse. Aunt Ophelia, heavily wrapped and in tears, was looking off apprehensively across the icy sea. But Molly, who was quicker-witted, instantly guessed that her Uncle John meant to remain on the brig. "Come down with us, Uncle John!" she cried.

He nodded but stood still and only looked at them. Now indeed Molly was sure that he was not coming.

The propeller had begun to turn, and the launch was moving. With a sudden impulse she leaped out upon a cake of ice that was lying against the side of the vessel behind the boat, and, skipping across it, grasped the anchor cable. Swinging herself up to the guards, she scrambled back aboard. Captain Linscott came rushing to meet her to bid her go back to the boat.

"No! No!" cried Molly. "If you stay, Uncle John, I shall! You'll need me, Uncle John!"

The captain spoke sharply, but Molly did not move. Then, noticing that the launch was backing to the side again, she ran suddenly to the gangway and, rushing below, gained her cabin and locked herself inside.

Captain Linscott followed her to the door and threatened to break it down, but to all that he said Molly kept repeating, "If you stay, Uncle John, I shall. You'll need me, Uncle John. You'll be lonesome without me, Uncle John."

The boats were losing precious time, and so finally Captain Linscott went on deck again and bade Sanders go without the girl.

Even then after the boats had moved off it is doubtful whether Aunt Ophelia fully comprehended just why her niece had gone back to the ship.

Not until long after the sounds of the propeller had died away in the distance would Molly unlock the door of the cabin. Then at last she came out, smiling but still defiant.

Captain Linscott was thoughtful. In three days Sanders would return; there would be another chance, he believed, to transfer his niece to the *Winona*. So for the present he said nothing to her. In a few minutes Sam appeared from some hiding place in which he had been lying.

The day, their first alone on the vessel, passed without incident, except that an Innuit whom they knew pretty well as "Joe Snooks" came paddling off to the

brig in his bidarka; he was curious no doubt to see whether the vessel were abandoned.

Hearing him shout, Molly went to the rail. "What you want, Joe?" she asked.

The native looked up and laughed. "You no go?" he said. "You fleeze. You mak sick."

"No make sick," Molly replied. "No freeze. Have good fire. We get along fine. You see."

They saw bidarkas going off to the other ships and heard the natives shouting to one another; they had found out that the whites had gone and were in high glee. Though the crews had left the flags and signals flying at the mastheads of all four vessels, yet the ships looked strangely deserted; you saw no bustle on the decks, no boats putting off, no smoke rising from the try-kettles. It was a lonely spectacle. And Captain Linscott was beginning to worry about his wife and the boats.

Sam cooked a good dinner; they had corned beef and plenty of vegetables and also oranges from San Francisco. And Sam was not only a good cook but a skillful baker; his cakes and puddings were delicious.

The little dining room adjoining the galley was warm and cosy and had served as a sitting room during the long evenings. To beguile the tedium of the voyages Aunt Ophelia had brought books by the dozens. At odd moments Captain Linscott had been teaching Molly navigation; and after they had eaten Sam's dinner he sent her on deck with the sextant "to catch the sun"; but the sun was already "running low"; it did not rise until between ten and eleven o'clock, and it set shortly after two o'clock. The *Norcross* was then lying in latitude 71° 30′ north, longitude 154° 10′ west. Molly had made some progress in working out observations by means of the tables that mariners use. She also kept a log book of the voyage—the log book from which this narrative is largely compiled.

That day and the next the weather continued calm, and the temperature did not change much. By the second night, since the water was still open, they had reason to believe that Sanders had reached the refuge ships with Aunt Ophelia and the crew. If all went well, they expected the mate to return to the brig by the third or fourth evening.

A swarm of bidarkas and several bidars were now gathered round the *Golden Eagle* and the *William Crane,* which were lying a mile farther down the coast, Looting evidently had begun. On the beach opposite the two vessels crowds of natives had gathered. Disagreeable as the spectacle was, Captain Linscott thought that to interfere would be imprudent; he did not wish to incur the enmity of the natives and provoke an attack on the *Norcross.* "But they will have to let us alone!" he exclaimed with determination.

"Could we keep them off, Uncle John, when there are so many of them?" Molly asked doubtfully.

Captain Linscott did not reply at once. He was pondering means of protection. In the hold there was a considerable quantity of lumber, redwood boards and joists, shipped from California for making partitions and bins to stay the heavy oil barrels on the homeward voyage. Presently the captain went below and with Sam's aid began to pass the boards up through the forward hatch. Molly helped to drag them forward and distribute them along the rail. Then the captain set to work to spike upright pieces of joist to the rail; the sticks were seven feet high and ten feet apart all round the deck. This task occupied them until after sunset, but the next morning they went to work again. When they had finished they had a strong board fence seven feet high all round the outer rail—a barrier that the natives would not easily surmount. Here and there in the fence the captain made portholes large enough to hold a gun.

"I don't think these Point Barrow Huskies will go so far as actually to attack us," Captain Linscott said reassuringly to Molly, "but it is well to be prepared. I think that Sanders and I can stand them off if they try it."

That afternoon and throughout the evening they looked for the return of the mate. He did not appear, however; nor did he come the next day—or at all. He had met with a grave accident. On the way down to the refuge ships, when the boats were well past Icy Cape and were making what haste they could, the steam pipe of the little engine in the launch had burst, and Sanders, who had been bending over it at the time, was terribly scalded on his hands and face. After that unfortunate event the boats were obliged to proceed more slowly, propelled by oars in the hands of shivering men. At last, however, they reached the *Winona* in safety. Sanders was in such a painful plight that for him to return to the *Norcross* was unthinkable; in fact, the poor fellow never fully recovered. Besides, the launch was temporarily disabled.

Sanders had pleaded with several of the sailors to return and inform Captain Linscott of what had happened, and one of them, a Kanaka, finally consented to go; he had set off on foot alongshore, but no one ever heard from him afterwards. Perhaps he lost his way among the inlets of the great lagoon; possibly the natives killed him.

On the following day the *Winona* and her consort sailed for San Francisco, where they arrived without incident six weeks later.

As day after day passed with no tidings from Sanders the anxiety of Captain Linscott and Molly is easy to understand. And what might have befallen Aunt Ophelia also worried them. Perils nearer at hand, however, soon occupied their attention. The brief span of daylight was rapidly growing shorter,

and the weather was becoming colder. A few nights later the belt of open water along the coast froze over, and the natives went off to the vessels on foot. Every day they were swarming over the three abandoned ships; they helped themselves to whatever they wanted. Once Molly counted seventy-two of them round the *Chimborazo,* which was lying moored to the ice floes not more than three hundred yards from the *Norcross.*

Captain Linscott's high board fence greatly interested and puzzled the Huskies. Numbers of them approached to scrutinize it, but when the captain motioned them back they made no attempt to climb aboard. He knew many of them by name and accosted them good-humoredly. "You fleeze, Captain Lincot. Come dark you fleeze," they called up to him and laughed uproariously.

Calm and partly foggy weather continued for eight days longer; then came a cold, clear night with brilliant auroras, followed by a tremendous snow gale from the southeast that raged along the Alaskan coast for two entire days and a night. The recently formed ice on the open water along the beach broke up, and even the heavy floes, grounded offshore, began to heave and grind with noises like low thunder. Captain Linscott had not believed that the vast field of ice, which covered hundreds, perhaps thousands, of square miles to the north, would move again that winter. To the shoreward margin of it, where the ice had carried her, the *Norcross* lay moored by cables and ice hooks; but now the whole expanse was moving, splitting and shivering as if an earthquake were rending it. Of the perils of their situation that night Molly's log book gives a graphic picture.

CHAPTER III

THE log book of the *Norcross* contains this entry in Molly's small but strong young hand: "Oct. 28th. Blowing hard offshore all day; not much sea; brig adrift, bumping the ice. Uncle John thinks the floes are moving back from the coast again. There is nothing we can do; only two hours of daylight; too dark at three o'clock to see the shore. Sam got our dinner as usual. Warm and comfortable below except for the bumps. Four inches of snow on deck, and it keeps flurrying round inside the board fence. Night so dark we cannot see the other ships. The floes make one constant rumble like distant thunder.

"I went on deck at two o'clock. Somewhere far astern there was a different noise from that which the ice made. I called Uncle John, and he said that two of the ships were colliding—probably the *William Crane* and the *Golden Eagle*. Looking out astern, I saw a great, dim, dark shape close to us; it proved to be the *Chimborazo* adrift. At three o'clock I went up to look out again. The dark, dim shape was much nearer; I could see masts against the sky. I called to Uncle John that one of the ships was close to us. 'Come away from there!' he shouted. 'Come away quick!'

"I ran forward and had not much more than done so than there was a crash astern, and the bowsprit of the *Chimborazo* poked through Uncle John's fence and came so far inboard as to upset one of the try-kettles. The brig shook as if we had struck a reef. Uncle John went aft with a lantern but bade me go below. Just then we heard a strange, frightened voice hail us: 'Ship ahoy! What ship is that?'

"I was frightened, and Uncle John dropped the lantern; we had not supposed that there was a soul left aboard any of the ships. Uncle John picked up the lantern and shouted, 'This is the *Norcross.* Who the dickens are you?'

"'I'm Bill Barkins,' the voice replied. 'I stayed aboard the *Chimborazo,* and I wisht now I hadn't! For heaven's sake, Cap'n Linscott, let me come aboard the *Norcross!*'

"'Better stay where you are for the present, Barkins,' Uncle John replied. 'I'll see about it to-morrow —if we all don't go to the bottom before that time!' Just then the *Chimborazo's* bowsprit poked into us again, and more of the fence was torn loose. Before long the two vessels swung apart and drifted clear of each other. If there had been a heavy sea running, the *Chimborazo* would have sunk us." Here the entry ended.

The gale abated during the morning hours, and at sunrise the *Chimborazo* was lying stationary among the ice cakes not more than a cable's length from the *Norcross.* The *Golden Eagle* also had drifted nearer and was less than a mile away. All three vessels had moved up the coast and were farther from the beach. The ice fields had moved seaward.

During the forenoon Barkins lowered himself to the ice cakes, and, making his way round about, succeeded in reaching the *Norcross.* Then for some time he talked excitedly and rather incoherently of his adventures on the *Chimborazo.* He was not a valuable addition to the party; to Sam in the galley he proved to be only a bother. Moreover, he was quarrelsome.

Three days of calm, clear weather followed—a rare circumstance in the Arctic at that season. Captain Linscott repaired his fence, for the natives were coming off to the vessels again.

At noon of the third day as those in the cabin were

"MY NAME IS WALLACE, NEWTON WALLACE," THE ELDER MAN SAID

sitting down to dinner they heard the distant whistle of a steamer. Captain Linscott sprang to his feet. "That's Sanders!" he exclaimed. "He's back at last!"

"That sounds too grum for the power boat, Uncle John," said Molly.

They hastened on deck and were astonished to see a small steam vessel that resembled an ocean-going tug; flying Canadian colors, it was approaching slowly along the open water from the east. Two men were on deck forward, and one of them was looking through a glass at the *Norcross*. Presently the whistle sounded again. Captain Linscott rang the ship's bell in response, and a few moments later the steamer altered her course and with some difficulty on account of the ice approached to within speaking distance. Captain Linscott hailed them, and one of the men replied:

"This is the *Ranger* from Vancouver and Victoria —last summer to the mouth of the Mackenzie, prospecting for coal and petroleum. May we come aboard?"

Captain Linscott bade them welcome, and, pushing away the ice, the tug veered in alongside and let down a chafe timber. The captain opened the little gate that he had made in his fence, and the two strangers, one of whom was of middle age and of good appearance, the other much younger, climbed aboard.

"My name is Wallace—Newton Wallace," the elder man said. "I am a petroleum engineer; and this is my son, Hartley Wallace."

Captain Linscott introduced himself and Molly. "I hope, gentlemen," he said, "that you will excuse my board fence. It isn't quite shipshape; but I'm wintering here, and I built it to keep out the Huskies, who are growing much too familiar."

"I see," the elder Mr. Wallace replied, laughing. "Good idea, I should think. The natives seem to be

rather numerous," he added. "We counted fourteen bidarkas round one vessel farther down the coast."

Sam, who was much concerned lest the dinner might become cold, struck his gong vigorously; and the captain, who had observed that their visitors apparently were persons of good breeding, invited them to join him and Molly at the midday meal. The Wallaces were quick to accept, and the hour that passed was pleasant for every one.

Mr. Wallace talked freely of himself and of his son. At the opening of the previous season, he said, they had come north by way of Bering Strait, looking for signs of coal and oil in the lower valley of the great Mackenzie River. They had intended to return along the coast by mid-August, but ice fields at Herschel Island had prevented their doing so, and so they had resigned themselves to winter there. But during the last gale the ice had opened, and they had set off at once; they had hoped to reach home by Christmas.

Molly learned from young Mr. Wallace that he intended to make a name for himself in journalism; he already was attached to the staff of the *Toronto Globe*. He looked very young in his furs, though as a matter of fact he was nineteen. Catching sight of Molly's banjo as they rose from the table, he laughed and, taking it in his hands, played a bar or two of Dixie. "I made the mistake of not bringing mine with me," he said. "It's a great solace for lonesomeness."

The visitors took leave without delay: they wished to avail themselves of every last moment of open water round Point Barrow.

"I'm afraid you will not make it," Captain Linscott said to them.

But they were both sanguine. "Here's hoping we meet again somewhere," young Wallace cried, bowing to Molly.

Two nights later the open water along the shore froze over. The sun had set that day at about half

past one in the afternoon; by supper time the temperature had sunk to zero, Fahrenheit. But the little party aboard the *Norcross* had plenty of dry wood below—fuel for use under the try-kettles is one of the important items of a whaler's outfit. With some difficulty Captain Linscott set up an extra stove in the cabin.

The natives had not come close to the *Norcross* of late, but occasionally the captain and Molly could see them round the *William Crane* a mile farther down the beach. They appeared to be demolishing the vessel and hauling the planks and timbers ashore.

The next day snow began to fall, and in the midst of a violent flurry Molly and Captain Linscott heard a faint voice calling, "Help!" Molly, who had been reading Ivanhoe aloud to the captain, put the book down, and they hastened on deck. "Who's there?" Molly cried as she caught sight of dark forms on the ice alongside.

"It's Wallace," a thick, distressed voice replied. "We've lost the *Ranger*. Take us aboard if you can. We're in bad shape."

Bad shape indeed! Besides the elder Wallace and his son one of the sailors of the tug was there, and all three were so nearly frozen that Captain Linscott had to go down and help them up the side. In the lamplight and the warmth of the cabin they looked truly pitiable; all were frostbitten, and Mr. Wallace's feet were frozen. Removing his boots, they applied snow to his feet, but immediately he was in great pain.

It was not until the three men had eaten that the younger Wallace began, in a shaking voice, to tell of their experiences. The story was tragic. In five hours after leaving the *Norcross* three days before they had almost reached Point Barrow and had found that the belt of open water was very narrow and had many cakes of ice, through which the *Ranger* forced

her way with difficulty. Frequently the boat struck with great force; often it was at a standstill. But the Wallaces had no thought of turning back.

At last one of the cakes staved a bad hole in the hull on the port quarter, and water began rapidly to enter. The pumps helped somewhat, but not enough to prevent its flooding the engine room. The water reached the fires, and almost instantly there was a terrific explosion and a blinding rush of steam. Mr. Wallace, his son and the surviving sailor found themselves over the side, struggling among the floating cakes of ice. Fortunately, the beach was no more than fifty yards distant, and they reached it in safety. "I hardly know how we got ashore," said Hartley Wallace. "Part of the time we were crawling over the ice; part of the time we were wading shoulder deep. All I know is that we got ashore somehow, wet through."

"And the rest of your crew?" Captain Linscott exclaimed.

"Heaven knows what became of them!" the elder Wallace roused to say. "The explosion may have killed them; they may have been scalded to death; or they may have drowned, trying to reach shore. I saw nothing of them. We were struggling for our own lives. After we got to the beach we shouted and stood waiting as long as we dared. The *Ranger* sank out of sight, all but her funnel; the water was shoal there."

During those dreadful days since the catastrophe the three men had been trying to make their way back to the *Norcross*. Two Huskies whom they had met inland had given them a chunk of frozen whale meat; otherwise they had had nothing to eat since their boat went down three days before; at night they had had no fire or indeed shelter except what they had made by piling up stones and moss. "We couldn't have stood it much longer," the elder Wallace said.

"When the storm came on to-day I had given up hope. Hartley went ahead, exploring for the ships, and finally he found the brig here and came back to get us."

For several days Captain Linscott and Molly were much occupied with caring for their disabled guests. Hartley Wallace's fingers and toes were only slightly frostbitten; but his father's feet were very painful. Captain Linscott took him into his own cabin and looked after him there as best he could. Hartley was put into the mate's cabin; and the sailor who had escaped with them—his name was Dills—found accommodations with Barkins forward of the galley.

A few days later Hartley, who knew that his father and he were putting their new friends to much inconvenience, went to examine the *Chimborazo* with a view to moving aboard her; since both vessels were now frozen in, it was not hard to go from one to the other. He found more than two feet of water in the hold and noticed with regret that the vessel was sinking, though gradually; some of the seams evidently had opened slightly during the great gale.

"The oil and whalebone aboard her ought to be salvaged," Hartley remarked to Captain Linscott on his return. "There's a lot of it."

"Yes, Baker had laid in a fine fare," the captain replied. "But what can we do? We haven't help to get it out."

"I can help," Hartley said. "And Dills will soon be able to work."

Molly had come on deck while they were speaking. "I can help too," she said, laughing. "It's a shame to have all that oil and bone sink, or to have the Huskies burn it—when whalebone is worth at least three dollars a pound in San Francisco!"

"But this isn't San Francisco exactly," remarked Captain Linscott. "We don't know that we shall ever be able to get the *Norcross* home."

"Well, sir, nothing venture, nothing have," Hartley said. "I move that we all put that stuff aboard your brig. It may yet fetch you a fine sum. The former owners cannot complain. It will be a dead loss if it goes down with the vessel."

They crossed to the *Chimborazo*. The natives already had carried off most of the furniture and food, but they had not moved the casks of oil and the whalebone in the hold. The bone was in long slabs, or "plates," just as it was removed from the huge mouths of the whales. Hartley passed two or three of them up through the forward hatch, and the captain tossed them over the rail upon the ice. "I can make a sled for hauling this bone to the *Norcross*," he said. "By using a block we could perhaps hoist out some of these barrels of oil and take them aboard."

They estimated that there were at least ten tons of bone in the hold and probably not less than twelve hundred casks of oil.

During the following afternoon they constructed a long sled of redwood deals and shod the runners with hoop iron. Cold winds kept them close aboard the brig all of the next day; but on the second day they transferred on the sled almost a ton of bone to the *Norcross*. The captain summoned Barkins to bear a hand. Hartley declared that he liked the job; and Molly, who was helping to draw the loads, said that the work was good fun. Dills, who soon was in condition again, proved to be especially helpful in hoisting out oil casks with tackle and block. And so the work continued. One day they transferred to the *Norcross* thirty-three casks, worth perhaps nine hundred dollars.

Captain Linscott had assured Hartley Wallace of a liberal share in the profits, and immediately the young man became ambitious to save not only the oil and bone in the *Chimborazo* but the oil and bone

in the *William Crane* and the *Golden Eagle*. "Only think," he exclaimed to Molly, "if we can get all that stuff down to Frisco or Victoria, it will bring us enough money to keep us for the rest of our lives!"

After the brief days of toil on the ice the little company passed the long evenings very enjoyably. The captain and Hartley were wont to fetch Mr. Wallace in a chair from his cabin,—for the poor man was quite unable to take a step,—and then Molly took turns with Hartley at reading aloud to him and to the captain. "Miss Molly," Hartley exclaimed ingenuously one evening, "if it were not for poor dad's feet, I should be having an awfully good time here! I'm afraid it's too good to last," he added as he thought of the terrible experience that had brought him and his father back to the *Norcross*.

For a week or more Barkins had resented being asked to help salvage bone and oil, and he was constantly quarreling with Sam and often with Dills, who was a quiet, honest English tar. In bad temper one morning Barkins went back to the *Chimborazo* and again took up his abode there in Captain Baker's cabin. But he had no one to cook the small amount of food that the Huskies had left; and Sam utterly refused to carry anything to him.

So twice a day Molly carried a large platterful of food to the disgruntled sailor. She would set it on the deck and call out, "Rations, Barkins"; then she would return to the *Norcross*. Sometimes Captain Linscott, sometimes Hartley Wallace, went with her. The captain did not like to have her go alone.

At that time of the year the sun scarcely showed at all, though before and after midday there was an hour or two of yellow dawn light in the south. There was also a great deal of bright aurora, which at times filled the entire sky and shone down strangely on the desolate ice floes, the adjacent coast and the deserted ships. Frequently the lights were pinkish, and

once or twice they were almost red; at times those aboard the *Norcross* could hear their faint, uncanny rustling far above them. Besides the aurora there was brilliant moonlight every month.

The moon was shining one evening when Molly set off alone with Barkins's platter. She had climbed to the deck of the whaler and was about to call to him when, happening to glance off across the dim ice fields, she saw a vast, indistinct white form moving slowly eastward as if it were walking over the floes. The sight gave her a strange feeling. She looked again to make sure that she really had seen the thing. Whatever it was, it was a long way off and was as dim as mist; yet she was sure that it was no illusion. Just then she heard footsteps coming from the brig, and, looking down, she recognized Hartley. "Climb up here and see what you make of this," she called to him.

Hartley mounted the ladder and looked in the direction in which Molly was pointing. For perhaps a minute he stared in silence.

"Great heavens!" he whispered at last. "What is it?"

"You see it then?"

"See it, yes! What can it be?"

"I don't know; it looks like something awful!" Molly replied in a quivering voice.

For several moments they watched the shape; it was proceeding leisurely.

"That can't be mist," Molly said at last.

"Mist, no!" replied Hartley. "It's something alive; you can tell by the way it moves. But it looks to be fifty feet high," he muttered.

"I want Uncle John to see," Molly said suddenly, and, quite forgetting to call Barkins to his dinner, she hastened down on the ice and ran all the way to the brig.

Hartley followed her, but by the time they had got

Captain Linscott outside the shape had moved farther away. The captain saw it, however, and was as much at a loss to account for it as Molly or Hartley was. There was something unreal and ghostlike about the thing out there in the moonlight beneath the faintly rustling auroras.

CHAPTER IV

THOUGH Hartley and Molly watched for the strange shape the next evening and the two evenings that followed, they saw nothing of it. Nevertheless, the impression of a gigantic white monster bending forward and shambling slowly across the ice fields remained firmly fixed in their minds.

Ten or twelve days later, after the men had salvaged much of the bone and oil aboard the *Chimborazo,* Hartley and Captain Linscott set off to see what was on the *William Crane.* Sam and Molly accompanied them, and all walked on snowshoes, half a dozen pairs of which are always included in the outfit of an Arctic whaler. Hartley had armed himself with one of Captain Linscott's carbines.

They found the vessel largely dismantled. The Huskies had carried off much of the upper works, including the wheelhouse, the rail and even the doors of the cabin. They had taken also all of the food supplies; but the bone and the casks of oil in the hold appeared to be untouched. Captain Linscott estimated that there might be ten or twelve tons of bone; if he got the chance he was determined to salvage it.

On the way back to the *Norcross* the little party made a detour on the old ice of the floes, where the walking was better than on the newer, crumpled ice near the beach. An aurora was alternately flushing and darkening. As they pushed on they spied three foxes round one of the old blubber heaps that the crew of the *Chimborazo* had left piled on the margin of the ice field to which the vessel had been moored when they had abandoned her.

"Don't scare them; I'll get one of them sure,"

Hartley said and, keeping in the shelter of an intervening hummock, stole forward.

The foxes were acting strangely; they were running round and round the blubber at some little distance from it and did not appear to notice Hartley's approach. He crept forward to within fifteen or twenty yards of them and then fired and knocked one of the agile creatures over. Instantly a huge white bear rose from beside the blubber. It sniffed; then it growled menacingly and stood with long neck outstretched. Hartley decided that the most prudent thing he could do would be to hold his fire; otherwise the animal surely would attack them.

Captain Linscott was of the same opinion. "We had better let that chap alone," he muttered. "Here, Molly, you keep behind me. Let's sheer off."

After sniffing for a few moments the bear snorted and wheeled suddenly; then it started to lumber off across the floes.

Hartley picked up his fox, and they returned to the brig. Something in the way the bear had shambled off reminded them of the shape that they had seen in the moonlight, and finally they concluded that it was the mirage, or "looking," of a white bear crossing the ice fields at a distance. In the log book both Molly and Captain Linscott frankly admit that they had never known or heard that moonlight or aurora light or indeed anything except sunlight would cause a mirage; yet they could think of no other way of explaining the huge vague shape.

During the next few weeks the captain and the rest salvaged a great deal of bone both from the *Golden Eagle* and from the *William Crane*. There was now very little daylight, and zero temperature prevailed constantly. During the waning of the moon the nights were dark save for the auroras and for the stars; but frequently the auroras were so bright that it was practicable to move about without

a lantern and to make trips to and from the other ships. Moreover, it is a fact that the eyes of all had become used to the dim light, so much so indeed that the lamplight aboard the brig seemed strangely brilliant and uncomfortable.

All the while they were having trouble with Barkins. One day while they were at the *William Crane,* Hartley surprised him down in the hold boring a hole through the side with a two-inch auger; his object apparently was to sink the vessel so as to have no more salvage work to do. The man seemed to be vicious and wrong-headed about everything. He remarked to Sam one evening that if he had an ounce of arsenic he would poison everybody aboard the *Norcross.* Captain Linscott had thought more than once of putting him in irons.

Another cause for worry was the condition of the elder Wallace's feet; they seemed to become no better. He could not take a step, and he suffered a great deal. The poor man needed medical and probably surgical treatment, but doctors and surgeons of course were a long way off.

The Innuit alongshore were still making desultory efforts at getting the timber and the ironwork of the *William Crane* and the *Golden Eagle.* Often while Captain Linscott, Hartley Wallace and Dills were passing up "plates" of bone or were hoisting out casks of oil there would be fifteen or twenty Huskies round the vessels. The three men tried their best to keep on as good terms as possible with them. Hartley indeed came to be well acquainted with numbers of them and addressed them familiarly by name.

"Joe Snooks," the head man among the Point Barrow natives, had formed a strong admiration for Molly and had left several presents for her; among them was an elaborately carved walrus tusk. She accepted all of them good-naturedly and described them in the log book.

The Huskies had found axes and saws aboard the vessels, and one day they tried to cut down the masts of the *William Crane*. The top-hamper bothered them for a long time; then suddenly all three masts with attached rigging went over the side at once, and three natives were injured, and one was killed. For several days afterwards those aboard the *Norcross* heard great lamentations ashore. Finally the Huskies drew the body of their unfortunate comrade on a sled four or five miles inland; on the summit of the barren hills they deposited it and built a kind of tomb of flat stones round it.

By the 1st of February a bit of the sun's disk showed in the south again—an event that the Innuit celebrated with shouting, singing and capering. Sam also celebrated it by baking a plum pudding and by bringing on a basket of figs at dinner; Captain Linscott's previous whaling experience in the Arctic had led him to lay in a goodly surplus of food. The elder Wallace, who had been much depressed of late, was carried on deck to catch a glimpse of the returning sun.

For an hour or two that evening singing and the strains of a banjo rose from the *Norcross*. Happening to go on deck while Molly was playing, Captain Linscott spied a group of Huskies close to the vessel, listening to the lively music.

The captain's birthday was the 12th of February, and oddly enough Mr. Wallace's was the thirteenth. On both days those aboard the brig sat down to the best dinners that Sam could cook; and in the evening Molly and Hartley entertained the others with the banjo and song. In the midst of the merriment on the second evening Hartley smilingly remarked to Molly that he also was to have a birthday, on the 19th of March. "And when is yours?" he asked.

Molly did not reply at once. "I haven't any—at least, I don't know when it comes," she said quietly.

Hartley looked astonished. Later when he and Captain Linscott were outside together the captain told him of the tragic circumstances of Molly's birth at Hudson Bay and of her mother's death at the hands of the natives.

"Oh, I am sorry I spoke of it!" Hartley exclaimed contritely. "I didn't know."

"Of course not," said the captain. "But I shouldn't mention it again if I were you. It is a sad incident in my niece's life. Her father, Capt. Herbert Linscott, was my younger brother, and he also died before the end of that luckless voyage."

For a week longer the men continued to salvage oil from the *Golden Eagle.* Every day the sun was rising over the hills, and the sight of it cheered the workers.

By that time the Huskies had found the whale oil in the hold of the *William Crane,* and every day some of them would go to the vessel for the purpose of drinking it! To see a group of them, men, women and children, crowding round an oil barrel and drinking the rank-smelling stuff from cups and dippers that they had found aboard the ships gave the whites a curious and rather unpleasant feeling.

All the Innuit living in the region of Point Barrow seemed to be camping along the beach opposite where the *William Crane* was lying; they had built huts partly of ice and partly of boards from the vessels. The Innuit were so good-natured and easy-going that the whites aboard the *Norcross* were much astonished to find one day that they were quarreling among themselves. The crowd on the beach appeared to be greater than usual, and the captain and Molly, who were on deck, could hear angry shouting and could see several teams of dogs rapidly approaching.

Captain Linscott fetched his marine glass and looked through it. "There's trouble there," he said. "There's fighting."

The captain and Molly continued to watch and to wonder what had caused the commotion. After a time they saw several Huskies whom they knew coming in haste along the beach. Opposite the *Norcross* they halted, and immediately Joe Snooks and four others came out on the ice.

Joe seemed to be greatly excited; he was shouting hoarsely. The Husky really knew many words in English, but now in his excitement all that he could say was, "Cap'n Linscott! Cap'n Linscott! Tak' goon! Tak' goon!"

"What's the matter, Joe? What do you want a gun for?" the captain asked him.

"Bad man com'! Bad man com'!" said Joe.

At last the captain learned from him that a large number of Huskies from the vicinity of Herschel Island, to eastward, hearing of the abandoned whalers, had come with dog teams in quest of booty. Unlike the Point Barrow Huskies the Innuit from the vicinity of Herschel Island had never been in close contact with whalemen or with other whites; in fact, they were savages, and without provocation they had attacked and driven the Point Barrow Huskies from their huts. What Joe wanted was that Captain Linscott, Hartley and Dills should take their guns and shoot the intruders.

Naturally Captain Linscott concluded that the best thing for those aboard the *Norcross* to do was to take no part in the affair, but since the Herschel Island Innuit had deprived Joe and his people not only of their huts but also of their store of food, he did not object to their helping themselves to what oil was left aboard the *Chimborazo*. The vessel, after settling two feet deeper into the water, had grounded on the bottom, and the water inside her hull had frozen solid; to get the barrels of oil the Huskies had to cut them free with axes.

The temperature now frequently was forty degrees

below zero and often would not rise beyond that mark all day. The stoves in the brig required so much fuel that the men were obliged to draw upon the firewood in the *Golden Eagle.*

The work was too hard for Barkins. He at once declared that he was ill, and though he had a good appetite he refused to lend a hand at the sledge. Once he quarreled with Joe aboard the *Chimborazo* and then went to the *Norcross* for a gun; but fortunately Captain Linscott had locked up the firearms.

The Herschel Island Innuit were busy getting out what oil was left in the *William Crane* and were hauling it away on dog sleds. So far none of the newcomers had come close to the *Norcross;* but one day while Captain Linscott, Hartley and Dills were preparing to fetch a load of wood from the *Golden Eagle* the captain spied a party of them approaching.

Hartley, who was loading the wood on the sled while Dills and the captain threw it down to him, went forward to meet them. There were seven or eight Huskies, and all were clad in fur parkas with the hoods pulled over their heads. When they were within speaking distance Hartley said, "How do, Huskies," and made a friendly salute with his hand.

To his astonishment one of the party replied in very good English, "Hullo, matey! Wintering up here?"

"You are no native!" Hartley said to him, for he noticed now that the man's face lacked the flat nose and the thick lips of the Innuit. "You have been a sailor, haven't you?"

"Yes, I've been a sailor, if that's any of your business," the fellow replied.

"Oh, no offense," said Hartley. "I was only wondering how you came to speak English so well, and why you are with these Huskies."

"Oh, they're good folks," the man replied in a surly way. "I'd a sight rather live with them than

lead the dog's life of a sailor aboard a Hudson's Bay Company's ship. Huskies are a sight better people than whites."

"Oh, all right," said Hartley. "If you like native life, it is no affair of mine of course."

Probably the man was a white or a half-breed who had had a bad experience with his white companions and had turned renegade.

After several more minutes of talk that was not altogether friendly Hartley said, "My name is Hartley Wallace; what shall I call you?"

The fellow stared angrily. "Call me anything you like," he growled. "Call me Tom Tinker if you want to."

"Very good, Mr. Tom Tinker," Hartley said and laughed. "Now what do you want of us?"

"We want to know about that ship which is lying beyond the one you've got boarded up so high."

"How does that vessel concern you?" asked Hartley.

"We want what's aboard her."

"The cargo has already been salvaged," said Hartley.

"My folks think that what's left up here winters belongs to them," said Tinker. "Their shaman tells them so; and I reckon they've got as good right to it as you have—or anybody else," he added.

"Then you had better tell your folks and their shaman that they have no right whatever to these ships nor to anything aboard them," said Hartley. "Tell them also that this is United States territory and that they are trespassing here. Tell them that if they steal property here, the *Bear* [the United States patrol cruiser] will come up next summer and punish them."

Tom Tinker laughed incredulously. "The *Bear* won't follow us beyond the boundary," he said. "What we take we can keep, and don't you forget that!"

The Huskies who were with him evidently understood the last remark, for they cried, "Ho, ho!" jeeringly. Two of them had seal spears. Another was curiously ornamented with rosettes sewed up and down the front of his parka and had walrus teeth strung round the skirt of it. Hartley guessed that he might be a shaman.

Hearing the loud voices, Captain Linscott had come on deck. "What do they want?" he shouted.

Hartley turned to reply, when without warning one of the natives who was standing behind several of his companions threw his harpoon. Whether he did it in bravado or with murderous intent is not certain; but it is a fact that the spear passed only a few inches over Hartley's head.

Captain Linscott caught up the carbine and called out to Hartley to run; but, fearing that one of the Huskies might throw another harpoon, the young man kept his face to them and walked backward. At sight of the carbine Tom Tinker and his natives started to move off in the direction of the *William Crane.*

"Sorry they've got a renegade among them!" Captain Linscott exclaimed. "One scamp of that sort is worse than twenty bad Huskies boiled down into one! Probably this fellow is a sailor who has deserted from his ship on account of some crime."

For four or five more days the three men continued to fetch firewood from the *Golden Eagle,* but they went armed and kept a sharp eye on the movements of the Herschel Island Huskies. As nearly as the captain and Hartley could count at a distance there were sixty or sixty-five of them, but whether they possessed firearms neither could determine.

CHAPTER V

TWO or three nights after the Husky threw the spear there was another affray between the friendly Point Barrow natives and the natives from farther along the coast to the east. There was a terrible uproar of angry shouting and wild outcries on the beach opposite the brig and also out on the ice round the *Chimborazo,* which some of the Huskies were trying to set on fire. As the planks began to smoulder Barkins came running to the *Norcross* for refuge. Joe Snooks also came off to the brig again and implored Captain Linscott to "tak' goon" and help him against the invaders. Seen dimly under the fitful light of the aurora, the whole spectacle was wildly fascinating.

Fearing an attack on the brig, Captain Linscott loaded the bomb-lance gun and mounted it at a hole in the fence; then he ordered that the carbines be kept always close at hand. But the invaders were too much occupied with their enemies to attack the whites.

The main result of the fracas was that the Herschel Island natives drove the friendly Huskies farther up the coast. At daybreak the following morning those aboard the *Norcross* saw that the invaders were in possession of the *Chimborazo,* which the fire had not damaged much, and were busy ransacking it. All day they were coming and going to the vessel; and they made a great racket as they dragged away the oil barrels. Molly counted thirty-four Huskies, though there may have been more.

Once or twice during the day several of the invaders walked round the *Norcross* and scrutinized it closely as if reconnoitring with hostile purpose. Captain Linscott was loath to try to drive them off. "I don't

want to use firearms against natives unless I'm actually driven to it," he explained.

But Hartley thought that the Huskies would grow bolder and bolder and eventually would try to come aboard the brig. "And that would never do," he said with emphasis. "They would begin stealing things, and if we resisted they would murder us."

The following night was cloudy and dark. Captain Linscott kept watch until one o'clock and then, since all was quiet, lay down for a while.

Less than an hour later, however, a glare of light at the window of Molly's cabin wakened her, and she went hastily on deck. The *Chimborazo* was on fire again, and the Huskies were running here and there and shouting angrily. She quickly waked the others; but Captain Linscott would not allow any of them to leave the brig or try to put the fire out; he feared that the blaze was a trick to lure them out upon the ice.

At first the fire burned slowly, but finally it gained headway and blazed fiercely throughout the latter part of the night; the ice on all sides was lighted up for many rods. Shortly after daybreak the masts fell. The hull continued to smoulder, and blazed fitfully for several days.

Captain Linscott guessed that some of the Point Barrow natives had returned secretly and in revenge had set the fire. Hartley suspected Barkins of doing it and reminded the captain that the sailor had been out on the ice late that night and had not returned.

The next night at almost the same hour the *Golden Eagle* burned! Though the vessel was at a good distance from the *Norcross,* Molly and the others could see the Huskies running round it and throwing snow and ice upon it. Apparently, however, the fire was in the oil. It burned brightly till morning.

While Captain Linscott, Molly and the Wallaces were breakfasting, Dills, who had been watching on

deck, came down to report that a Husky who had come off from the beach had hailed the vessel.

"One?" Captain Linscott asked.

"Only one," Dills replied.

"I will see what he wants," Molly said and went on deck.

The visitor was standing out on the ice twenty or thirty yards from the side of the vessel; he was Tom Tinker, and he seemed to be in a very ugly mood. "Where's the captain of this old hulk?" he shouted. "What do you whites mean by burning the ships? Do you think you are going to get and keep everything for yourselves? This stuff belongs to us just as much as to you. If I so much as lift my hand, these Huskies o' mine will take this old brig away from you and turn you out on the ice!"

Molly assured him that no one on the *Norcross* had set the fires. She invited him to come on board and discuss matters with Captain Linscott. "We will give you a cup of coffee if you will," she added pleasantly.

"Oh, you'd like to get me in your power, wouldn't you?" the fellow said and sneered. "You can't fool me. I don't trust white folks. I hate them."

"I'm sorry you have such a bad opinion of us," Molly replied, laughing. "We have done you no harm."

Hartley, who had heard their voices, now came on deck. "Oho, Tom Tinker," he said. "Why did your Husky friend throw a harpoon at me the other day?"

"He only did it to scare ye," the renegade replied jeeringly. "He threw it over your head."

Captain Linscott now appeared and asked him what he wanted.

"We want our share of the oil and other stuff you have taken from the ships you burned," Tom Tinker shouted.

"We have burned no ship, and you will get no share of anything here," Captain Linscott said to him.

"We will take it! We will take it all!" the fellow threatened him.

"I warn you to keep away from this vessel," the captain replied sternly. "We have rifles, and we shall use them if you attack us. Better keep away and keep the natives who are with you away also."

Hartley, who was standing just behind the captain, nodded to Dills. "We could catch that chap," he whispered.

"Let's catch him then and tie him up," Dills whispered in reply.

They slipped suddenly past the captain, who was standing at the gate, and, dropping to the ice, made a dash for Tom Tinker. The renegade bolted, and they chased him almost to the beach. Once they almost had hands on him, but he dodged and sprinted again. At last, observing that five or six natives were running up the beach, Hartley and Dills stopped.

When Tinker saw that no one was pursuing him he also stopped and, drawing an ugly-looking knife, brandished it and shouted imprecations at them.

"Oh, don't get so hot," Hartley retorted, laughing. "We only did that to scare you."

"I wouldn't get too near that rascal," Captain Linscott advised them as they came back to the brig. "He's a bad one. He would knife us in a moment if he got a chance."

Thick, stormy weather came and lasted for three or four days. The nights were extremely dark except during the infrequent play of the aurora. Once in a while those aboard the *Norcross* could see small parties of natives going and coming from the *William Crane;* they seemed not to be interested in the *Norcross.* Nevertheless, the captain made sure that the gate in the fence was always barred; but, since no one could possibly break in without making consid-

erable noise, he sometimes allowed a night to pass with no one on sentinel duty.

Toward morning of the night of the 12th of March the elder Wallace, who, because of the condition of his feet, was very wakeful, heard slight noises against the hull outside his cabin. He had heard them for some time but had thought that perhaps a board of the fence had come loose and was rattling in the wind. At last a heavy bump startled him, and he waked his son, who was on the cot opposite his own.

Hartley went cautiously on deck and peeped out at a crack in the fence. A host of dark forms—he thought there were at least thirty—were moving stealthily on the ice below, but their moccasined feet made only faint, shuffling sounds. They appeared to be fetching great armfuls of something and piling it against the side of the vessel. Two or three Huskies —Tom Tinker's followers no doubt—were rolling a heavy object that Hartley surmised was an oil barrel. In a few moments they brought it close under the stern, and he was unable to see what they did with it.

Suddenly he realized that they were bringing combustibles! Broken-up planks and timbers, probably from the *William Crane!* His blood ran cold. They were planning to burn the *Norcross* with everything and everybody on it! He knew that there was not a drop of water aboard except the little that Sam had obtained for their daily wants by melting snow and ice. Once the vessel was ablaze, what chance would there be of putting the fire out?

Hartley went below and spoke to Captain Linscott, who was in the mate's cabin. "The Huskies are trying to make a bonfire of us!" he whispered.

Captain Linscott was on his feet in an instant. He caught up the carbine that he always kept standing beside his cot. "Wake Dills," he whispered. "I will speak to Molly."

But Molly also had heard the movements outside, and as the captain knocked at the door of her cabin she opened it. "There are natives round us," she whispered.

"Yes," he replied. "Hartley has been watching them. They are up to some mischief."

Without replying, Molly slipped back into the room for a revolver; then she rejoined Captain Linscott. In the passage they came upon Hartley and Dills, and all four went quietly on deck.

The night was barely light enough for them to discern objects close at hand. Not far from the vessel they saw a large group of Huskies who seemed to be awaiting something that was about to happen. Beyond them they saw two natives coming along the shore; between them they were carrying something that cast a pale glow upward. "That's one of their fire kettles," Molly whispered.

"I believe you!" Hartley exclaimed. "They are coming to touch us off!"

"We shall give them a scare first," Captain Linscott said quietly.

The bomb-lance gun was pointing through a hole in the fence astern. Captain Linscott skewed it round and ranged it over the group of Huskies out on the ice; then he discharged it. The report boomed along the beach, and by the blaze of light that accompanied it they saw the long lance stick hurtling over the heads of the natives. It fell beyond them, and the bomb went off with a loud explosion.

Probably the Huskies had never seen a bomb lance fired. At any rate the sudden flash threw them into a panic. They turned and ran, and Hartley, climbing on the wheel-house where he could look over the fence, sent six or eight bullets from his carbine whining about their heads.

Meanwhile the captain was unbarring the gate. When he had succeeded the little party climbed down

upon the ice and ran round the brig to see whether the natives actually had set the fire. Though they found no blaze, they did find, against the entire shoreward side of the vessel, a most astonishing rick of broken woodwork, drenched with oil. "There's more than five cords of it!" Hartley exclaimed. "It must have taken them an hour or two to fetch all that wood out here. And look, there near the stern are two empty oil casks."

With the aid of boat hooks the captain and Hartley and Dills pulled the wood away and made a huge pile of it at a safe distance.

"That will do for firewood in case we run short," Molly said, laughing. "Uncle John, you won't need to haul any more."

What impressed the captain most was the elaborate extent of the plan and the horrible malice that was behind it. "That was Tom Tinker's work," he said. "The Huskies never would have gone into anything so extensive as that if worse brains than their own had not put them up to it."

"If I see that sneakin' scamp round here again I'll put a ball in him!" exclaimed Dills, who was not a man to talk much.

Captain Linscott turned. "No, Dills," he said; "it is better never to shed blood so long as you can possibly avoid doing it."

Though Sam, whom the firing had roused, had come down to help move the combustibles, Barkins, who had been with him in the galley, did not appear. Nor could any one find him afterwards aboard the brig. The captain thought that he might have gone out earlier in the night, and that the Huskies had waylaid him. It was hard to say just what had happened. The sailor had made a considerable collection of clothes and knickknacks that the crew of the *Chimborazo* had left behind when they had abandoned the vessel, but little of the stuff was to be

found on board the *Norcross*—a circumstance that only added to the mystery of his disappearance.

A good deal of foggy weather now prevailed, and the nights were dark; some one on the brig was always on sentinel duty. More than once the captain or Molly or whoever was on watch heard natives moving round the vessel; and several times chunks of ice, flung from the darkness, fell inside the fence.

One night Hartley heard stealthy footsteps approach to within a short distance of the brig and then cease as if the prowler had stopped to listen. "Good evening, Tom Tinker," he said at a venture. "What can I do for you?" The man actually was the renegade; there was no mistaking the surly, muttered response to the greeting.

"Tom, you had better keep away," Hartley called out to him. "Next time I hear you lurking round I am going to shoot."

They planned to fire over the head of the next native who came near, and it chanced that the following night while Molly was watching shuffling steps approached and moved with many halts completely round the vessel. She fired a shot over the fence. But the prowler proved to be a white bear; in the flash of the gun she had a glimpse of it as it galloped away.

Hartley and the captain came hurriedly on deck; yet they had to laugh when Molly said, "Only a bear!"

As the spring advanced numbers of white bears appeared in the vicinity; perhaps the many carcasses of whales that had been killed and cast adrift attracted them. Some of the dead whales were lying in the ice; some the gales had rolled ashore.

For ten days after the Huskies had tried to burn the *Norcross* those aboard the brig saw them constantly round the *William Crane* and at their huts ashore. By that time they had probably got everything of value from the luckless vessel. During the night of

the 29th of March the hull began first to smoke and then to blaze; it burned brightly till daylight. No doubt the Huskies had fired it. The same night they left the vicinity of the vessels; apparently they had given up all expectation of further booty and had set forth toward their homes.

By a curious coincidence Barkins reappeared the following day and asked to be taken on board the brig. He was in a sorry plight. He was bareheaded, bruised and almost famished and was limping from an injury to one of his legs. In reply to Captain Linscott's questions he said that the natives had taken him prisoner while he was out walking on the ice and had held him until they went away, when they had beaten him and turned him adrift.

"But how did you happen to take your kit and all your other property with you when you went out for a walk on the ice that night?" the captain asked him.

"I wanted to hide my things," Barkins replied and shifted his eyes. "I was afraid the brig might get afire."

The captain smiled and turned his head. Apparently the sailor had taken his belongings and deserted to the Huskies, but in the course of a week the natives had had enough of him and had driven him off. "Barkins, you are a poor specimen of a sailor," Captain Linscott said. "Go down to the galley and ask Sam to give you something to eat."

CHAPTER VI

NOW that Tom Tinker and his friends had departed, Joe Snooks and his Point Barrow Innuit soon returned and took up their abode again in the huts opposite the blackened wrecks of the *William Crane* and the *Golden Eagle.* In the log book, under date of April 13th, Molly records:

"Joe and eight of his folks were here to-day, begging for food. He says they have had a hard time and are eating frozen whale meat from the carcasses in the ice. He wanted a barrel of oil; so Uncle John and Hartley Wallace hoisted a barrel from the hold and gave it to him. It seems too bad to have these improvident creatures drink the oil after we have worked so hard to save it! Every barrel of oil is worth thirty dollars if we can reach San Francisco."

As a matter of fact, however, the little party continued to give the natives a barrel of oil every day from April 13th to June 4th.

Part of Joe Snooks's tribe went with their dog teams to the Seashore Island to hunt walruses; but about forty of them, men, women and children, remained near the *Norcross.*

Though the sun was "coming back" fast, the weather was still cold, and the ice showed few signs of breaking. Time passed rather pleasantly, however, for Molly and Hartley still read during the evenings, and when the weather was not too stormy they went out on the ice to look for seals, white foxes and bears. As May approached they were all strangely ill for a week or more, though no one could give a satisfactory reason for the trouble. At the same time Mr. Wallace's feet became worse. He

quite lost hope, and Captain Linscott was afraid that eventually the poor man would be obliged to have both feet amputated.

During the last days of May and throughout June the sun ceased altogether to set even for an hour, but moved grandly round the northern horizon at midnight and again soared to the zenith. Then, quite unexpectedly, after the long, icy chill, came a whole week of hot days. Flocks of ducks passed over. The ice fields took on a white and porous aspect, and along the beach water poured down in streams. One day the party heard a peal of thunder, and far to the east black clouds rose. Summer in the Arctic had come with its usual impetuous rush. Then followed a three days' gale from the southeast, with a deluge of furiously driven rain and a flight of hailstones. The ice alongshore disappeared with magical suddenness, and once more the ponderous floes began slowly to recede from the coast. A few days later a bowhead whale rose and spouted in the open water.

"Looks as if there might be two fathoms to swim in round Point Barrow," Captain Linscott remarked. "And the *Norcross* draws only ten feet. Oh, if only I had six more good men besides Dills, we should soon be out of here!"

The captain had not ceased to hope that he might pick up a crew man by man from whalers that came north that summer. The *Norcross,* a vessel of three hundred and nine tons, required a crew of at least nine sailors.

But what if no whalers came? Every day the captain and his friends discussed the problem of what they should do in such a case. Once when Molly suggested that natives might do duty as sailors as far as Kotzebue Sound the captain only laughed.

But Molly did not put the notion aside—for the very good reason that no other help seemed likely to be available. She and Hartley began craftily to

discuss the matter with Joe Snooks; as inducements they mentioned certain articles from the brig's outfit, such as axes, augers, gimlets, awls, nails and whale lances, and also a carbine and ammunition for shooting bears and foxes. They had some difficulty in making the Husky understand just what they wanted him to do, but when he did understand he rather liked the idea of a long trip on the big ship, and he promised that his two boys, Talluk and Tarsuk, who might have been eighteen and nineteen years old, would go with him. Besides Joe Snooks an old Husky whom the whalemen called "Booby Face" and another nicknamed "Peter" also wanted to go. The rest of the natives appeared to be afraid.

"It will be a queer crew," Captain Linscott said when Molly and Hartley had told him of their success. "But we have Dills and Barkins, such as he is. Sam can help a little."

"Count me in!" Hartley exclaimed. "I'm able-bodied!"

"Well, well, in that case perhaps we can weigh anchor and set the mainsail." The captain's tone was doubtful.

At last he determined that, if the wind were favorable, he should try to work the brig round Point Barrow. Accordingly, he ordered the board fence demolished, the cargo stayed below and some of the canvas bent on, that all might be ready.

Part of the top-hamper had fouled during the winter gales, and Dills had gone aloft to clear it. But the task proved to be more than one man could do; the captain himself therefore climbed up to help. The two men had their hands full. In the course of the work the captain, who was standing out on the main yard, was hauling hard at a line, when it suddenly parted, and he pitched backward and fell to the deck, a distance of seventeen or eighteen feet. For a moment he lay stunned. Then, recovering himself,

he tried to regain his feet, only to fall back, helpless and in great pain.

At the time Hartley was in the cabin with his father, and Molly was below alone, engaged in the prosaic task of mending worn clothes. Hearing the sound of something striking the deck above her head, she knew instinctively that it was a human body. With a little cry she ran on deck. Captain Linscott was stirring feebly. "O Uncle John!" she exclaimed, rushing to where he was lying. "Are you badly hurt?"

"Pretty bad, I'm afraid, Molly," the captain replied and groaned. "It's my right leg; I'm afraid it's broken."

Dills was hastening from aloft. Hartley came up from below.

"What luck; what luck!" the captain lamented. "A broken leg! Just as we were ready to start this thing must happen! And now I'll be on my back six weeks, and the season passing by!" He tried to rise on one foot, but the pain was so great that he fell back again, faint.

Supported by Dills and Hartley, the captain at last was able to bear his weight on his left foot. With much care they helped him descend to his cabin, where they placed him on the couch. Molly and the others did what they could for him. After they had applied compresses they bound the leg in a splint that Hartley had fashioned from strips of pine wood and extended it in as correct a position as they knew how. All the while the captain exclaimed from time to time, "Why need this thing have happened just now of all times!"

Hartley also was distressed over the inevitable delay; he had hoped they would soon reach some port where his father might receive medical aid. "What can we do? Oh, what ought we to do?" he exclaimed more than once that day as he and Molly

and Dills went to and fro to attend to the wants of the sufferers on the couches.

Neither Hartley nor Molly had for a moment thought of the brig's moving without Captain Linscott's presence on deck. Such a thing had not seemed possible.

"What if we were to be shut up here again!" Hartley exclaimed. "We couldn't pass another winter."

"No," Molly replied soberly, "we couldn't. We haven't the supplies for it."

All the next day the two went about with grave faces. The situation was critical. The floes were receding, and the belt of open water alongshore was widening; who could say how soon northerly gales might drive the ice back on the coast?

For two more days Molly did little except to care for the two disabled men below—not a light task either, for both were suffering a great deal. During those two days, however, in spite of her exacting task, she was summoning her resolution to act on a new and at first startling thought.

"Uncle John," she said at last on the third day, "Joe and the other Huskies have been off to us twice, and they are coming again to-day to see when we intend to sail. If the wind holds right, hadn't I better try to beat up round Point Barrow?"

"Molly!" Captain Linscott exclaimed. "I'm afraid you would run us ashore!" he added.

"But, Uncle John, we ought to get away while we can," Molly replied.

"I know it! I know it!" he cried with an uneasy movement and a groan.

"I can put Dills at the wheel," Molly continued. "Hartley Wallace can relieve him at times. I will call Sam to help man the capstan. I am pretty sure we can get the anchor up and set the mainsail and the jib, if not the foresail."

Captain Linscott looked wretchedly anxious. "You can try, Molly," he said at last.

"It will just be sailing alongshore, you know," Molly reminded him. "The coast will be in sight all the way down to Cape Lisburne and Kotzebue Sound. I know how it looks. I've got the chart and know where to keep off."

"Very good," the captain said wearily after some thought. "Send Dills down here."

When Dills came Captain Linscott bade him get a two-inch auger, bore a hole through the deck above his couch and fit a length of hose into it; then he had the sailor fasten the upper end breast-high at the foot of the mainmast. The hose, thus arranged, made an excellent speaking tube through which he could give advice to Molly on deck in case of trouble.

A bidar, with native women rowing it, had come off bringing Joe Snooks, Talluk, Tarsuk and the others. Hearing the bustle, Hartley, who had been caring for his father, came hastily on deck. "What now?" he cried.

"We sail at noon to-day," Molly replied.

"With Captain Linscott laid up below!"

"Yes; we are going to do the best we can without him," Molly replied.

"You will have to give orders and be skipper, then," said Hartley. "I don't know the first thing about it. But I'll be mate and try to get your orders executed."

In the log book Molly merely records that they sailed at noon. It is through Hartley Wallace that we know of certain particulars like weighing anchor and making sail. It was quite a sight, he afterwards wrote for the press, to see "Skipper Molly" set Sam and Barkins and some of the Huskies at the capstan to haul up the anchor. For several minutes she could not get them to push against the bars and walk round together. At last the Huskies seemed to understand

a little better what to do; but the anchor was embedded in the bottom and started hard, and the inexperienced crew at the bars balked, danced about and accomplished nothing. Molly alternately stopped them and started them again. "Walk her round now. Walk her round!" she cried. "All together now! Push, Tarsuk! Push, Talluk! Push, Booby Face! Barkins, you lazy villain, push at it! All together now! There you go! There she starts! There she comes! Round you go! Keep her coming now! Keep her coming! Ready to haul inboard and fish it to the rail!"

She had even greater bother at first to get the sail set. For a while she could not make the Huskies "heave ho" and "hold fast all" in sailor fashion. They were an hour setting the mainsail.

Fortunately, there was a fair southeast breeze, and with Dills at the helm the old brig veered round the blackened wreck of the *Chimborazo* and moved heavily off up the coast. Now it was Hartley's business as mate to throw the lead frequently, for both east and west of Point Barrow even as much as a mile offshore there is often less than three fathoms of water.

Hartley says in his description of the voyage: "We swam the old brig alongshore all the rest of that day; we had to throw the lead every few minutes to be sure that we shouldn't get aground. We doubled the Point (Point Barrow) at about midnight and passed close to the place where the *Ranger* sank; I could see the top of her funnel still sticking out of the water. I should have liked to examine the wreck, but there was scarcely depth of water for bringing the *Norcross* alongside it, and we did not like to try to lower the whaleboat—the last boat that the brig carried. So I said nothing to father about our seeing the wreck, for I thought I should only make him feel more despondent.

"We might have kept on day after day, for there was plenty of light; even late in July the sun did no more than to disappear below the ice fields to the north for fifteen or twenty minutes. But after twenty-four hours of sailing we agreed that we really should have to sleep even if the sun did shine. So, as there was almost no swell, we veered up to the edge of the floes and, putting out two ice hooks to hold by, turned in for naps. I am afraid that the two disabled members of our family group were sadly neglected that day and indeed for many days afterwards. We were necessarily much occupied with sailing the brig. As for Sam, he was busier than ever in the galley, cooking to satisfy the Huskies, who by the way would not eat his puddings and cakes and sniffed disapprovingly at his baking-powder rolls. Meat and mashed vegetables suited them pretty well, but they were not quite happy until we had opened a barrel of whale oil and handed them a dipper. Personally I have a very poor opinion of a Husky crew; an Innuit goes too far back toward primeval men to be an agreeable shipmate. But our little skipper contrived to get work of a sort out of them."

Wet, foggy weather set in, and the wind shifted to the northeast. After a rest of five or six hours the crew cast off from the ice, and the *Norcross* proceeded down the coast on a southwesterly course. During the second day they passed Icy Cape, and on the following day they passed Cape Lisburne. Molly remembered the mountains of the coast line below Cape Lisburne. Though the wind now was favorable, the vessel was in constant danger of running into lakes of ice.

During the next two days they were bumping along before a strong wind that coated deck and rigging with sleet. Even Joe and his Innuit shivered and looked pinched. For thirty-eight hours Molly, buttoned up to her chin in one of Captain Linscott's oil-

skins, scarcely left the deck save for a few minutes at a time to get warm food and drink at the galley stove. With equal fortitude Hartley took his turn at the wheel. And all the while Captain Linscott, lying on his back below, kept the end of the tube in his hand and asked anxious questions and gave valuable advice. He worried sadly, not being on deck.

Off Cape Krusenstern in the thick, dirty weather they sighted a large sailing vessel close on the starboard quarter. It was the first craft of any kind that they had seen on their voyage down the coast.

"It's a bark and looks like a whaler!" Hartley exclaimed.

Molly was of the same opinion and, hoping to hire an able seaman or two, ordered Dills to stand in toward the stranger as close as safety would permit. Then she ordered Hartley to set the flag at half-mast.

CHAPTER VII

THE bark that Molly and the others had sighted proved to be the *Proserpine* of San Francisco, Israel Whitehouse captain, bound for the Arctic whaling grounds. She was the only whaler to go north of Cape Lisburne that season.

Seeing the flag on the *Norcross* at half-mast and astonished to hear a girl hailing, Captain Whitehouse hove to, ordered a boat down and, rough as the sea was, came alongside under the brig's lee and prepared to go aboard. "This is the *Norcross!*" he exclaimed. "Why, we heard that the *Norcross* had been abandoned in the Arctic last year and that Captain Linscott and his niece had perished up here! His wife came home in the *Winona.*"

"I am Captain Linscott's niece," Molly replied. "My uncle is below with a broken leg."

Captain Whitehouse glanced about the deck. "Who is navigating?" he asked.

"I am trying to," Molly said quietly.

"But what's your crew?" the captain inquired with a sharp look at the natives forward.

"Just what you see, captain," replied Molly. "Three whites and five natives."

Captain Whitehouse whistled and glanced at her in amazement not unmixed with admiration. "Well, you're a brave one!" he exclaimed.

All the while Captain Linscott below was asking questions through his speaking tube. Why had they come to? Whom were they hailing? In response to his request Molly immediately conducted Captain Whitehouse down to him.

The two captains knew each other by sight and by reputation. Their greeting was as hearty and sym-

pathetic as you would look for between men exposed to the perils of so dangerous a profession as seafaring. Captain Whitehouse was able to assure Captain Linscott of the safe arrival of his wife in San Francisco; and he told him also of the accident to Sanders, the mate.

The *Proserpine* carried a crew of thirty-two sailors and whalemen, every one of whom Captain Whitehouse needed aboard the bark; but he was fully aware of the necessitous circumstances that the *Norcross* was in and so offered to spare three of his crew, if they would volunteer and if Captain Linscott would pay them their wages for the season's voyage. But as the brig was so short-handed the seamen from the whaler's crew were backward about volunteering, and Captain Linscott had to offer a bonus. Finally two brothers, Sim and Tim Martin, originally from New Bedford, offered to transfer; and then a Kanaka, who was known among his shipmates as "Lanky," said that he also was willing. Captain Whitehouse thought that the *Norcross* might fall in with one or more trading craft in Kotzebue Sound and perhaps could hire more sailors from those vessels.

Besides giving the three sailors Captain Whitehouse gave a dozen cabbages and a box of lemons—a most welcome gift indeed after the too protracted diet of canned stores and salted meats. Already the elder Wallace was suffering from lack of fresh vegetables; some of his symptoms were those of that most dreaded disease of mariners in the far north, scurvy. He was still quite unable to take a step or to bear his weight on his feet.

The next day, after parting with the *Proserpine,* the *Norcross* came to anchor off the Kikitaruk region and Hotham Inlet, in Kotzebue Sound. The Kobuk River enters Hotham Inlet, and already the locality was swarming with three thousand or more natives, who had come for the salmon fishing.

Joe Snooks, Talluk, Tarsuk and the other Huskies were now clamorously eager to go ashore. With Hartley's aid Molly paid them off according to agreement, and within an hour they had gone; they scarcely stopped to say good-by.

On the following day Hartley, who was rambling about among the fishing parties on shore, picked up an Aleutian islander who had come on a trading schooner. The fellow said that he had served on the coast-patrol cruiser *Bear* and that his name was Gosgo. Hartley hired him at once for the *Norcross,* and he proved to be a very good seaman. Hartley also secured a huge string of hump-backed salmon—all that he could fetch aboard. After Sam had boiled and fried them even the invalids said that they were delicious.

While the *Norcross* was at anchor the crew were able to refill the fresh-water barrels. And on the following morning the *Norcross* left Kotzebue Sound and, doubling Cape Espenberg, entered Bering Strait. The same evening they passed the Diomede Islands on the starboard quarter. Several times they saw lofty Cape Prince of Wales towering high in the mists, and if the sky had been clear they would have been able to see East Cape, the most easterly point of Asia, for between the two points the strait is only thirty-nine miles wide. Unfortunately, however, there was much low-lying fog, and it thickened as they entered Bering Sea. Then before long they began to encounter patches of slush and small pieces of floating ice. During the following night the wind blew hard; the mist was thick, and the scud flew low on the sea.

Thus far Molly had been sailing mostly by landfall; now she had to trust to course sailing by compass. But, quite unsuspected even by Captain Linscott, the *Norcross's* compasses had somehow gone wrong during the winter. Just what the trouble was is not

clear, but it is said that in the far north the compass varies considerably according to the direction of prevailing winds.

About noon Molly caught a few glimpses of the sun, made a sextant observation and with Captain Linscott's aid worked out a course that they believed would take them safely and widely past the east cape of St. Lawrence Island—that large, long island which half spans the upper part of Bering Sea. Since hiring the seamen from the *Proserpine,* Molly had been able to set more sail; and, with half a gale blowing from the north, the old brig was sousing along in the fog and rain at a good rate.

Suddenly through a rift in the mists the lookout forward, who happened to be the dependable Dills, saw to his horror the dim outline of a lofty cliff directly ahead! "Breakers dead ahead!" he shouted.

Molly had gone below in response to a call from Captain Linscott. Hartley was in the galley, giving Sam instructions for the preparation of the elder Wallace's food. Fortunately, Tim Martin was at the wheel. Instantly, without waiting for orders, he set the helm hard over and shouted, "Luff! Luff!"

The old brig came up into the wind with a rush and barely scraped by a number of foaming reefs that extend out from the cliffs at the east end of St. Lawrence Island.

Then for the first time Molly and the captain began to distrust the compass; they did not know what to think. "For two days," to quote from the log book, "we went blundering down Bering Sea, not knowing whether we would bring up on St. Matthew Island or Nunivak. Dills said, 'That 'ere compass is sick; it's got the jimjams!'"

Finally the weather cleared a little, and they caught the sun's altitude at noon according to Captain Linscott's chronometer and worked out their position

roughly as latitude 60° 20′ north; longitude 174° 30′ west. According to those calculations they were much farther west than they had supposed. Molly was perplexed, and Captain Linscott was quite unable to explain. "We shall make Yokohama instead of San Francisco, on this course!" he exclaimed.

To add to their perplexities another storm came on and increased into by far the worst gale they had yet encountered. They shortened sail, but even so the old brig labored so heavily that some oil barrels broke loose from the tiers below and went tumbling from one end of the hold to the other. Short-handed as Molly was, she needed every man on deck. To secure the truant barrels was impossible; and more broke loose with every violent plunge of the vessel until no one dared to venture into the hold. Captain Linscott's anxiety as he lay there helpless on his back is easy to imagine, and the sufferings of the elder Wallace of course were even more acute. All through one terrible night the brig labored onward, hammered inside and outside. The captain expected nothing less than that the shifting barrels would batter the hull open.

The gale finally abated, and to the thankful surprise of both skipper and crew the old brig was still afloat. There were slight leaks along the bends forward, but none of them seemed to be serious. Hartley and Dills and Gosgo spent one entire day in finding the leaks and staying the loose barrels.

The weather was still cloudy, and for three days those aboard the *Norcross* were unable to catch sight of the sun. They had sighted mountainous land to southward and assumed that it was one of the Aleutian Islands. The supposition, however, even if it were true, aided little in determining where they were, for the Aleutian chain of islets extends from Alaska far over toward Asia. Though Gosgo was a native of the island of Akutan, he could not even guess which

one of the many islands of the chain they were approaching. Apparently the land was uninhabited.

At last they passed to eastward of the island and entered a channel that opens between it and another low-lying island. There Dills threw the lead at frequent intervals; since there was plenty of water, the brig passed through the opening and emerged on the open Pacific. From facts that came to light later Molly and the captain concluded that the channel that they had threaded was the one between the islands of Atka and Amlia and therefore that they were a long way off their proper course. Molly had expected to pass through the Aleutian chain by the well-known Oonimak Pass, the usual gateway for whalers, steamers and other craft bound north from San Francisco and other American ports.

A tragic event immediately took their attention and saddened all their hearts. On the night after the *Norcross* had passed the Aleutian Islands, Hartley, who was in the habit of catching naps whenever he could on the cot near his father's, had been asleep for a few minutes when his father roused him and asked for a drink of water. Hartley went and fetched a cup, and after Mr. Wallace had drunk the water he inquired whether the weather had cleared sufficiently to make an observation and determine the position of the vessel.

"Not yet," Hartley replied, "but we hope to make an observation soon."

"Is Miss Linscott still navigating the vessel?" his father asked.

"Oh, yes, and doing fine," said Hartley.

"She is a wonderful girl," his father remarked. "She will get you safe to San Francisco, I hope."

"She'll get us all there safe, I don't doubt," Hartley replied confidently. "And then, dad, we will have your feet fixed up. There are good doctors there in Frisco."

Mr. Wallace did not reply or speak again for some moments. At last he said, "If anything happens to me, Hartley, you know what I want done about your mother and sisters."

"Yes, dad; but bear up. Take heart. You will come out of this all right when we reach San Francisco."

"Maybe," his father said wearily. "But I'm a pretty sick man, my boy."

"I know, dad; I know you are having a hard time. But bear up; keep your courage all you can."

"Yes," the older man replied slowly and seemed to fall asleep.

Hartley himself slept for perhaps an hour; then he waked and went hastily on deck. As he left the cabin he noticed that his father was breathing heavily; he appeared to be asleep. Hartley took Molly's place on deck and did not go down to his father's cot again for two hours or more. When he did so he carried a bowl of porridge from the galley. Mr. Wallace did not stir when Hartley spoke to him. Then to his consternation Hartley found that his father was not breathing and that he had become cold. He had died alone there while his son was on deck.

The realization came as a great shock to the young man. For a moment, grief and poignant regrets overcame him. Tears rushed to his eyes; he dropped to his knees by the cot and buried his face beside the face that now was so strangely quiet on the pillow. "Father, O my father!" he sobbed. Then in the midst of his grief he remembered his duties, and, bracing himself to bear his affliction as manfully as possible, he rose and went first to Captain Linscott's cabin. "I have bad news of my father to give you, captain," he said. "He is no longer living."

"My poor boy!" Captain Linscott cried impulsively and grasped his hand. "I do fully sympathize with you!" For a few moments he was silent;

then he added, "I am not so greatly astonished. Mr. Wallace has been a very sick man for weeks."

"I know it—now!" Hartley exclaimed. "But, oh, I did not seem to realize it before! Of course," he continued after a pause, "I understand that in a case like this my father will have to be buried at sea."

"I am glad you realize the necessity of it," Captain Linscott replied. "We are in the midst of a long voyage, and there is no other way. You will have to tell my niece. Break the news to her as gently as you can. She is only a girl, you know, and is under a great strain at present."

Hartley went on deck. Molly, standing by the rail, was watching the morning light brighten the east. She turned as Hartley approached and at first sight of his face knew that something very serious had occurred. "Your father, is he worse?" she asked.

"Father has passed away," Hartley replied, and tears again filled his eyes.

Molly was startled. Like Hartley, she had not believed that Mr. Wallace was dangerously ill. "Ah, me, if he could only have had proper medical aid!" she lamented. "But what could we do?"

"There was nothing that we could do," Hartley replied. "You took us aboard your vessel. You did everything you could. We would all have perished but for the kind refuge that you and Captain Linscott gave us. It was fate. But, oh, my poor mother and sisters! The last thing father said was to charge me to carry out certain provisions that he had made for their comfort before we went north. It was not very much. We are far from being wealthy; but at least I can care for mother when I get home to Toronto."

"You will have your share of our salvage—if we can save it," said Molly.

"But I hardly feel that I am entitled to anything," said Hartley. "We were merely refugees on the *Norcross*—thankful ones too!"

"But you worked with us to save the bone and oil," Molly replied. "My Uncle John is a just man. He means that you shall have a fair share with us if we can make our port and save the stuff."

Few incidents of human life are more sorrowful than death and burial at sea, when the heavy-shotted hammock shroud of a dear friend "drops in his vast and wandering grave," and the waters close over the loved form, and the ship sails on and leaves the dear one behind forever. The death of the elder Wallace was unusually pathetic. The little group on the old brig had become much endeared to one another—a natural enough relation, after having passed together through the long, dark winter of the Arctic, where the bleak, elemental forces were so grim and gigantic and human life seems so trivial. The long evenings that they had spent in reading, the arduous labors that they had shared, and the many dangers that they had faced together, all had served to foster an unusually strong bond of friendship. The body of the dead engineer was consigned to the sea on the second day after he died. Captain Linscott would have read the burial service, but as he was still unable to leave his chair Molly read it in his place, though tears so blinded her that she was obliged to pause more than once. Poor Hartley was the only mourner to stand beside the grating that served as his father's bier. When Molly had finished reading, Sam struck the ship's bell three times, and Dills, assisted by the Aleutian sailor, slid the shrouded body over the side. They had done all that they could.

On the 21st of August the lookout sighted the smoke of a steamer far down on the southern horizon. Two days later a deeply laden bark flying no ensign passed within easy hail; but it was a Japanese craft, and there was no one aboard who spoke English. At Molly's suggestion Hartley tried to get the vessel's position from them. Finally, by pointing to the

heavens and holding up the sextant, he made them understand. Then with many smiles the Japanese skipper came to the rail and displayed a board on which in Arabic numerals he had marked the latitude and longitude. As nearly as Molly could distinguish the writing it was 46° 50′ north; 162° 20′ west.

The figures only added to her perplexity, however, since the position that they indicated was a long way west of where she supposed they were. Captain Linscott had little confidence in the accuracy of the figures; yet the position of the *Norcross* as determined by solar observations and chronometer was not much different from the position that the Japanese had given. At a venture Molly and the captain altered the course two points.

The same day there was another cause for anxiety. No one had paid much attention to the slight leaks that had occurred during the heavy gale when the oil barrels broke loose. But now Hartley found that there was considerable more water below than ordinarily collects in the bilge of a ship. "Looks as if we were slowly sinking," he said to Captain Linscott and Molly.

Though the captain was not so much alarmed as Hartley he decided that they must all watch the water in the bilge. After that some one measured it every day, and by Hartley's reckoning it became deeper by one inch every twenty-four hours. At last they rigged the pump, but they were too short-handed to work ship and at the same time do much pumping.

Fine weather with northerly winds now prevailed, and the *Norcross* sailed on uneventfully for five days more. On August 28th the lookout sighted another steamship; it was approaching from the west. As the sea was calm, Molly determined to communicate with the vessel and learn their true position. Accordingly she ordered the brig hove to, the flag set at half-mast again, and the boat lowered. The

steamer proved to be the *Empress of India,* bound home to Vancouver from Asiatic ports. It was a large passenger steamship carrying the mails, and hence her captain was in no humor to stop for long; but maritime law requires that no ship shall pass a distress signal at sea. The *Empress of India* slowed her engines, then reversed and stopped, and her passengers flocked to the rail.

CHAPTER VIII

FOR some reason Molly makes only brief mention in the log book of their meeting the *Empress of India.* She says merely: "Aug. 28th, hailed the *Empress of India* and got our true position: Latitude 39° 28′ north; longitude 161° 20′ west. The captain—his name is Tillotson—refused, because he was carrying the mails, to send the ship's doctor aboard us to look at Uncle John's leg. He advised us to make Honolulu instead of San Francisco, since we were a good way off our proper course and were nearer the Hawaiian Islands than the mainland. He gave us a spare compass."

In Hartley's newspaper account of the incident there are more details, some of which are rather amusing. "We got the laugh from the bridge," he says, "when we told the officers of the *Empress* that we were bound home to San Francisco from the Arctic. The first officer asked who our navigator was. 'I guess you are bound for Valparaiso,' he said. The sailing master then gave us our position. Some of the smart ones among the passengers at the rail tried to jolly us a little, but Miss Linscott appeared not to hear a word of what they said. She was the object of a great deal of admiration, but she did not seem to notice that either.

"The sailing master also gave us our course for Honolulu, though we did not ask for it; we thought we could easily figure it from our position and from the chart. How we came to be so far off our proper course to San Francisco is more than I know. Miss Linscott's first effort at great-circle sailing, assisted very feebly by mine, had not been entirely successful.

Still we had come down the North Pacific without actually running over many islands!

"I could see that Miss Linscott was vexed with herself, but she did not say much; nor did Captain Linscott. As a matter of fact none of us liked to take the bone and oil into Honolulu, since we might have to freight it home to San Francisco at an expense of five or six thousand dollars. 'What do you think you will do?' I asked Miss Linscott after we had gone back aboard the brig and she had talked with Captain Linscott.

"'Oh, I suppose it was good advice,' she said. 'I think we had better follow it.'

"I thought so too, for the water below was slowly gaining on us. So we set the new compass in the binnacle and squared away on our new course. We had fine weather and fair winds every day for the next four days, and on the morning of September 2d we sighted the blue mountains of the island of Oahu on the southern horizon. That afternoon we were off Makapu Head and had the good fortune to fall in with the whaler *Kathleen,* bound home to Honolulu from the Okhotsk Sea; after we had hailed her and had had a 'gam' we followed the blithe little craft into Honolulu Harbor, without a pilot."

Even at that time Honolulu was to all intents and purposes an American port of entry. In the town there was a marine hospital in charge of American physicians, and Molly's first care was to have Captain Linscott transported to it and have his leg examined. For, unfortunately, the fractured leg was not doing so well as Molly and the others had hoped; perhaps the condition of it was owing to the captain's anxieties and to certain rough jolts during heavy weather that had displaced the rude splint. The opinion of the doctors at the hospital was rather discouraging; the broken bones, they said, had partly knitted but not in quite the right positions; and un-

less the bones were readjusted the captain would be lame for life and, moreover, would have to use a cane or a crutch. The only remedy, it seems, was to break the fractured ends of the bones and set them properly. Since that treatment would oblige Captain Linscott to remain at the hospital for six weeks or longer, he was at first much inclined to be content with a bad limp and to go about as soon as possible. But Molly and Hartley finally persuaded him to reconsider this decision and to submit to the longer but better method of recovery.

Meanwhile the two did the best that they could with the old brig and her cargo. First of all they had to hire a tugboat with a power pump to lie alongside and pump out the great quantity of water in the hold so that they could find the leak and stop it. Then it was necessary for the port officer to make an examination of the hull, and the result of it meant misfortune for the old *Caleb Norcross*. He condemned the vessel as being unseaworthy and ordered her to be broken up!

The news came as a blow to the Linscotts and to Hartley, who had hoped after a few weeks' delay at Honolulu to sail for San Francisco. But port authorities are inexorable. The bends of the brig were much sprung and were dangerously rotten. There was nothing to do except to break out the cargo and for the present store it, at an expense, by the way, of almost a thousand dollars. Then for the sum of twenty-one hundred dollars they sold the hulk of the poor old *Norcross* where it lay at anchor. Molly arranged for the transaction of all the business in the course of three weeks and reported progress daily to Captain Linscott at the hospital, near which she had been able to find lodgings.

Then one day Hartley felt obliged to take the steamer home by way of San Francisco. His mother and sisters were as yet unaware of his father's death,

and there were family affairs that required his immediate attention. On reaching San Francisco, Hartley made haste to find Aunt Ophelia, to whom he was the first to bear the joyful tidings of the safe arrival of her husband and her niece at Honolulu.

When Hartley had gone Molly had the important duty of settling port charges and seamen's wages for the voyage from the north. According to agreement she paid the sailors from the *Proserpine* and also the Aleutian Islander double wages; and she gave the faithful Dills a bonus of three hundred dollars in addition to his wages. According to agreement also she paid Sam a thousand dollars; he had well earned it. Once he had the money, he declared his intention of paying a visit home to China, but in the same breath he promised to return and cook for them again whether they were afloat or ashore. As for Barkins, Molly was saved the unpleasant task of dealing with him. Before Hartley had gone he had handed the fellow a hundred dollars and had bade him "clear out" unless he wanted to be put under arrest for trying to scuttle the *Golden Eagle*.

The prices that Molly and her uncle got for the oil and bone show in an interesting way the profits that whalers of those days made. The prices then prevailing were not far from sixty cents a gallon for whale oil, one dollar and twenty cents a gallon for sperm oil and two dollars and ninety cents a pound for whalebone, which was by no means the highest price quoted for bone in those years. On several occasions buyers paid six dollars a pound for choice lots. The *Norcross* had brought down from the Arctic almost twenty-nine tons of whalebone, and when they had finally marketed it in San Francisco it netted them the handsome sum of one hundred and fifty-three thousand dollars. The sperm oil netted approximately eleven thousand dollars. The whale oil salvaged from the other vessels amounted when

added to what the *Norcross* had taken to thirteen hundred and fifty-six barrels and netted in San Francisco, after transportation charges from Honolulu had been deducted, somewhat more than thirty-two thousand dollars. Altogether there was slightly more than one hundred and ninety-six thousand dollars.

At Captain Linscott's direction Molly at once wrote to the owners of the *Chimborazo,* the *Golden Eagle* and the *William Crane;* she told them exactly what had happened in the Arctic and informed them of how much oil and bone she and her uncle had salvaged from the vessels. Finally she asked what they would consider a fair adjustment in the circumstances. In every case the owners replied that, as the vessels and cargoes had been abandoned and would undoubtedly have proved to be a total loss except for Captain Linscott's efforts, they would advance no claim. But Captain Linscott and Molly wished to do what they thought was right, and after some reflection they sent to each shipowner the sum of eight thousand dollars.

There remained the more delicate question of what should be done in the case of Hartley Wallace, who certainly had been of the greatest assistance to them. True, Hartley had said that he did not feel entitled to any compensation and that he was thankful for shelter and for the opportunity to reach home from the north; but both Molly and the captain thought that they owed him something. Finally after they had been in Honolulu about a month Captain Linscott introduced the subject by saying, "Molly, what ought we to give Hartley?"

Molly, who was checking off local bills at a little table beside the captain's cot, did not reply at once. "Uncle John," she said at last, "I suppose you realize that we could hardly have got down here but for the help he gave us."

"I know, I know," Captain Linscott replied.

"And he worked very hard with us at salvaging. He's a fine fellow," the captain added with an interrogatory glance at Molly. "I liked him. I never saw a young man I liked better. He has been with us ten months. I think he is all right."

Molly went on with her work, and presently Captain Linscott asked her again how much she thought they ought to send to him.

"Oh, that is for you to say," replied Molly.

"But I want this to be for you to say," Captain Linscott insisted. "In this matter I should like to be governed wholly by your wishes. Nobody knows better than I that I shouldn't be here to-day if it weren't for you!"

Molly laid down her pencil. "Uncle John," she said with slightly heightened color, "I hope you will not think me foolishly generous to Mr. Wallace, but I should like to send him thirty thousand dollars."

"Very well, Molly. He shall have it!" exclaimed the captain.

And a week or two later a draft on a San Francisco bank went to Hartley for that sum. Molly wrote the letter that accompanied it—a letter that seems to be a bit formal. Molly wrote:

Mr. Hartley Wallace,
Toronto, Canada.

Dear friend Hartley. Inclosed please find draft for your share in our common venture on the old *Norcross's* last voyage. Captain Linscott is still at the hospital, and I am afraid he will be there for a month longer. I thank you for calling on Aunt Ophelia in San Francisco. She is coming out on the next steamer to join us here. I like Honolulu very much. I am a stranger of course to your mother and sisters, but I should like you if you see fit to give them my heartfelt condolences in their recent great sorrow.

Sincerely yours,

Molly Linscott.

It was only natural, I suppose, that in the course of so strange an experience together the young people should have become endeared to each other. Before Hartley had left Honolulu he had not hesitated to make Molly aware of his fondness for her. Molly herself had been more reserved; she knew that she had duties and responsibilities that would require a good deal of her time and careful attention. Perhaps that is why her letter was rather formal.

Hartley's reply was far from being brief. He wrote a very long letter in which among many other things he said, "Frankly I feel like a robber to accept such a sum from you and Captain Linscott for the little service that I was able to render you. Yet I cannot deny that your generosity has lifted a tremendous burden off my mind. Poor father's affairs were in anything save a prosperous condition; and as I am just starting in a profession that is far from lucrative I have been at my wit's end how properly to provide for my mother and sisters. Your gift—for the money is nothing less than a gift—has made everything easy for me. I will not speak of gratitude; that would be idle. You know already that on my side at least something far above gratitude actuates my every thought of you. And as soon as our tangled family affairs permit I hope you will allow me to visit you either at Honolulu or at San Francisco and express in person what I have so imperfectly written here."

In truth it looked, as writers of romance sometimes say, as if our "little snowbird" had "met her fate" up there by the ice floes in the Arctic night. Curious are the destinies that shape human lives! Molly was born on a whaler among the ice fields; and on the shores of an icy sea her mother fought all of one bitter winter day, fought and perished, to save her baby's life! And then sixteen years later that baby, grown to womanhood, had wandered, as from

natal prepossession, to the far north again to find a lover there. Or was it merest chance? Who will say?

Four months passed before Hartley could leave Toronto; long months too they seemed to him. But at last he was able to say that home matters were safely adjusted and that he could enter on his journalistic work with a fair prospect of success. The week after affairs were settled found him on the way to Honolulu.

Meanwhile Molly and Captain Linscott had made a change in their plans for future residence. Molly, little roamer as she had always been, had taken a great liking to Oahu and especially to Honolulu. She thought that the climate of the island was glorious, and she liked the Americans with whom she had become acquainted; they were all so friendly and helpful.

Captain Linscott also liked Honolulu, and after Aunt Ophelia came he and Molly determined to reside there and do their whaling from that port, if they did any—a circumstance that was somewhat doubtful, since they were now very well off in the way of property and Captain Linscott in spite of all that the doctors could do for him was still obliged to walk with a cane.

Molly and her uncle purchased a hacienda—a commodious bungalow and adjoining fruit garden; it was a beautiful place on the wooded slope of the mountain four or five miles out from Honolulu and overlooked picturesque Pearl Harbor, which in later years the United States was to fortify as a strong naval base.

When Hartley arrived he found his old friends already on the hacienda, living in rather a different fashion from the way he had seen them when he had first gone aboard the *Norcross*. But Sam was cooking for them again, and when they came down to meet the young man at the steamer wharf it was the faithful Dills, now turned coachman, that was driving the

ponies! As the vessel came up they saw Hartley at the rail, swinging his hat, and Captain Linscott swung his cane and shouted, "Ahoy!"

There is no doubt that the reunion was a joyful one. Hartley was their guest for a month; and then he also succumbed to the attraction of Oahu and, after sending for his mother and sisters, bought a little homestead less than a quarter of a mile from the Linscotts. For a year the two families had their share of good times; they voyaged from island to island of the group; they journeyed to the volcanoes and visited the many other scenic attractions that make the Hawaiian Islands one of the most charming places of residence in the whole world. To Molly and Hartley it was a year of romance followed in due course by their marriage. "Queen Lil" came to see the ceremony and gave the bride a wonderful fan of native featherwork.

And—well, that's what became of our cousin Molly's baby whom after so perilous a trip Addison brought home from the north.

And what has happened since? For all these things, as the reader will remember, happened thirty or more years ago. Ah, yes, our whilom little "singing bird" is now a matronly woman. She and Hartley have three boys: John Linscott Wallace, named for Captain Linscott, Addison Wallace—for Molly had never forgotten "Naddy"—and Newton Hartley Wallace. They are fine young fellows, and, true to their ancestry, all three are more or less actively engaged in whale fishing from Honolulu. Captain Linscott never got quite free from the cane, which he calls his souvenir of the Arctic night. Though he is nearing eighty years, he is still active and is pretty well for an old man. Aunt Ophelia died twenty years ago.

Hartley Wallace has become a popular writer and

is well known to a large number of readers. He and Molly have several times accompanied the boys on whaling voyages. But they hunt whales far differently now from the way they did in former days, when the *Norcross* voyaged to the Arctic. They go after them in a swift little steamer that looks like a destroyer—and is one, for the whales. They fairly run the poor whale down and then fire a bomb into him, which kills him instantly. To keep the carcass from sinking they pump air into it with a power pump that the steamer's engine drives. Then they tow several of the huge dead monsters ashore to a station where the try-works are situated. Whaling indeed is now almost a sure thing and is carried on with all the fatal effectiveness and celerity of modern warfare.

PART FOURTH

A MAINE GIRL IN THE NORTHWEST

CHAPTER I

A VISIT to the progressive, prosperous Oregon and Washington of to-day is an interesting experience, particularly for one who, like myself, has spent most of his life in New England. Yet the thing that I most enjoyed in my recent trip was meeting people, former New Englanders and old friends, who went to the Northwest years ago, and have become identified with its progress. Everywhere I fell in with them, at Portland, Seattle, Tacoma and Bellingham, and I was surprised to see how all their ideas had grown and enlarged in this new country.

"What might I not have done out here myself, if only I, too, had come!" I often exclaimed; and I wondered, half-regretfully, if I had missed a great chance in not migrating westward years ago with these boyhood acquaintances and schoolmates.

One day, as I was passing a bank in Seattle, a comely, middle-aged woman stepped from her motor-car, stopped suddenly, and called me by name.

I had to confess myself at a loss. "Why, I'm Julia!" she said. "You haven't forgotten Julia Sylvester, the little girl whom you used to go to school with in Maine, and the old squire's pung that we coasted in down Wilkins's Hill?"

"Forget!" I exclaimed. "I should think not! Why, you were the only girl who dared steer the old pung down that hill alone!"

"I knew you at once," she said, "years and years though it has been. Now do come and dine with me to-night. I want you to see my home. I was a 'Mercer maiden,' you know. I came out here to teach, but married three years later. I want to show you my four boys. I want to hear all about dear old Maine. Come this evening."

Yes, Julia Sylvester was one of the "Mercer maidens" who, in 1865, went all the way round Cape Horn to Washington Territory. Thus she took part in an episode of our country's history so curious that, like the Ancient Mariner, I feel disposed to seize my readers by the sleeve and make them listen to it.

The Sylvesters were neighbors of ours, and for three or four years Julia had kept her father's house. Her mother had died when she was thirteen years old; after that Julia did nearly everything that was done. The Sylvester place was a run-out old farm, and Rufus Sylvester, her father, was one of the run-out sort himself. There was good blood in the family, but it seemed to have skipped a generation in Rufus, to reappear in his daughter. The girl hoed the potatoes, weeded the garden, milked the cows, mowed the grass, and got in the hay alone. In short, she kept things going, and never had a holiday, so far as I knew.

Sylvester himself was likely to be off swapping horses with somebody or other—and usually getting cheated. The neighbors used to say that he was not at home thirty days in a year.

One fall, when we were reshingling the roof of the west barn, Julia came over and asked if she might have some of the old cedar shingles, which had been ripped off, and lay, with the nails still in them, on the ground under the eaves. The old squire bade

her take all she wanted and welcome. She carried home several large bundles of the best of them—for kindlings, we supposed.

But a few days later, when I was passing the Sylvester place, I saw Julia up on their large, high barn at work with a hammer, trying to patch the roof with the old shingles that she had begged from us. It was a difficult job. That barn roof had leaked for years, to the ruin of what little hay had been stored in it.

On catching sight of me, Julia hastily crept over the ridge-pole to the farther side of the roof; she was afraid of being laughed at. To get up there she had had to climb a long, rickety ladder; and how she had contrived all by herself to raise that ladder to the eaves was a mystery to me, for I knew from experience that such long ladders go up with difficulty.

When I told at home that evening what I had seen, the old squire was indignant. "That's no fit work for a girl!" he exclaimed. The next day, when Julia came for more shingles and nails, he took Addison and me, and went back with her to help. We thought that Julia was mortified at having been found out, but she did not desist. A few days later she got more shingles to patch the roof of the house with, and she did a pretty good job.

The selectmen of the town taxed Sylvester's farm only fifteen dollars a year, but year after year he failed to pay it, and finally the town was obliged to advertise the farm for sale, at public auction, for delinquent taxes. Something had to be done to save the place. All through July and August that summer Julia was out in the pastures or along the roadsides, often as early as four o'clock in the morning, picking wild raspberries and blackberries, to sell by the quart. She actually gathered fifteen dollars' worth of berries, and secured a stay of the sale for that year.

That was not the worst of her troubles, however. There was a mortgage on the farm, and since Sylvester was equally remiss about paying the interest, the holder of the mortgage threatened to foreclose. So that autumn Julia set to work drying apples, desperately. There was on the farm an orchard that, in spite of neglect, bore a good deal of fruit. By the middle of September Julia had the entire front of the house hung thick with strings of freshly-cut apple.

This so touched grandmother's heart that although we had plenty to do at home, she prevailed on us all to go over one afternoon and help Julia. We took along our new apple-evaporator, to expedite the drying process.

We found her busy paring apples. Our coming plainly embarrassed her; but we all took hold,—grandmother, Theodora, Ellen, Addison, Halstead and I,—and for three or four hours made the apples fly. In fact, we became so interested that we went back the next day and worked till dark. Later, thirty or forty of the young people of the neighborhood had an apple-bee at the Sylvesters'. Julia was grateful, but we could see that it wounded her pride that the neighbors should feel obliged to leave their own work and help her.

Altogether, Julia dried apples enough that fall to pay off forty dollars on the interest account, and to obtain a stay of the foreclosure proceedings.

The Sylvesters had three cows and a few lean sheep. Julia contrived to pay the taxes the next year by bringing up, on cow's milk from a bottle, three great, bouncing cosset lambs.

The farm had a good upland pasture—as New England pastures go. Julia milked the cows herself, and "put down" six tubs of butter the last summer she was at home; but the entire proceeds had to go to pay the interest on the mortgage. Nor did

she stop there. One day she came over to ask grandmother to show her how to make cheese, for the Sylvesters' milk did not abound in butter fat. Grandmother made a number of trips to her house to teach her.

By the time Julia was eighteen, there was not much in the way of work on a farm that she had not done or tried to do. It was a hard school—the only school she had for five years—but it made a self-reliant and exceedingly practical girl of her. So far from injuring her health, it had made her unusually robust. She was a good-looking girl, although her hands were as large and strong as a boy's. She was far from talkative, but when she spoke, it was in a low and pleasant tone.

A crisis in her life came suddenly. She might have gone on keeping her shiftless father's house as long as he lived, for she had a sturdy love of home and a healthy family pride; but one summer, while on one of his horse-swapping excursions at Portland, Rufus Sylvester married a widow, with a fierce temper, a really terrible woman. He had known her only thirty-six hours before he married her, and he brought his new wife home without telling Julia.

It is not strange, perhaps, that the new wife was disappointed in the place. She went outdoors immediately upon her arrival, and after a look round the place, began to storm with a richness of vocabulary such as those rustic scenes had never before dreamed of.

Rufus followed about sheepishly, trying to excuse things. She turned upon him and slapped him; then she made for the kitchen, where Julia was trying to get breakfast for them over the old, much-cracked stove. At sight of it the new wife expressed more unrestrained disgust. Julia regarded her in astonishment.

"Don't you stand there starin' at me, you hussy!"

cried the termagant. "I'll soon break you into the traces, or I'll spile a whole handful of hosswhips!"

"You will not need so many horsewhips as that for me," Julia answered, quietly.

"Hey? What's that!"

"I have done what I could here for five years," Julia replied. "Now you may take hold. I'll step out. After the talk I have heard from you this morning, I would never call you mother. So I'm going!" And she turned toward the door. But they were not to part so easily.

"You'll stop right here!" screamed Mrs. Sylvester, and rushed at her.

But Julia had done farm-work for five years to some purpose. Grasping her assailant by both arms, she set her down in a chair with such force that the virago was left breathless.

Rufus, who had come to the outer door, stood with mouth agape, looking in. With only one reproachful glance at him, Julia went up-stairs, made the few clothes she had into a bundle, and came over to our house just as we were sitting down to breakfast.

"Good morning, Julie!" the old squire said. "You are out early."

"Yes, sir. I've got a new 'mother.' She came this morning."

That was news.

"And she says she will break me into the traces or spoil a handful of horsewhips. So I am starting out in the world. I think I shall go to the factory at Biddeford, where Jane Batchelder went last year."

The smile on the old squire's face vanished. He glanced hastily across the table at grandmother, who rose suddenly. "Child, you come in here and tell me about this," she said, and led the way to the sitting-room. The result of that sympathetic talk behind closed doors was that Julia remained with us at the old farm from June till September.

The next day, seeing her father driving past, she went out to have a talk with him.

"You'll not need me any more, father," she said. "So I think I'll go to the factory. I'm eighteen now, you know."

Sylvester regarded his daughter in uneasy silence, and shuffled his feet in the wagon. "Well, maybe you'd better," he said. "Perhaps 'twould be as well if ye did."

"I think so, father," said Julia. "But you know I have hardly any clothes. I haven't had a new dress for two years, or a new hat; and I've worn out all of mother's clothes. Before I go to Biddeford I need a delaine dress and a hat. Couldn't you let me have ten dollars? I've worked hard, father. Don't you think I deserve as much as that, for some clothes?"

"Well, now, Jule, I don't see as I can. Your new marm wants a lot of things in the house. I don't see as I can."

"Father, I can't leave home in this soiled old calico dress! You must let me have something for a new one."

"I don't see as I can," her father repeated, feebly.

So Julia lived with us through the summer, helping in the house for an hour or two every morning, and then going out to pick wild berries to sell by the box. Generally she had from ten to twenty boxes ready to send whenever the farm wagon was going to the village. If there were berries anywhere round, she would get them. With the money thus earned she bought gingham and other goods for clothes, and did the sewing in the evening.

Grandmother thought her a wonderful worker. "Julia will do more than all the rest of us together," grandmother used to say. "Just let her plan for herself an hour or two, and the work is all done!"

What Julia now most lamented was that she had

been unable to go to school and qualify for a teacher's position. She asked Theodora and Addison to help her learn fractions, simple interest and grammar. She would often sit ciphering away on her slate till late at night. "I might be able to keep school, if I could go to some place where the people were dreadfully ignorant!" she said one evening.

The old squire had always liked Julia, and took a great interest in her evening studies, particularly her arithmetic. He thought that she had a fine mind, and he admired her resolute character.

"Julie, what would you do if you were a man?" he said to her one evening.

"I would go to Congress!" Julia replied.

It was such an unexpected answer that the old squire laughed. "I guess you would, Julie," he said. "I really think you would, if you started to. And I shouldn't wonder if you made a better Congressman than some who do go."

I might remark here that among us young people up in the New England hill-country, to become a Congressman was the height of our ambition. Daniel Webster was ever our great example. We declaimed his speeches at school, and longed to achieve somehow forensic triumphs at the national Capitol.

During the ten weeks that Julia was with us she had made and paid for that much-desired delaine dress, a hat, and other needful clothes. She had mastered fractions, interest, and several other rules in Greenleaf's Practical Arithmetic. She had also greatly improved her handwriting. Moreover, she knew what she knew with a remarkable accuracy.

Instead of going to the factory, however, she changed her plans, and went to Boston with a lady who had been spending the summer months a few miles from us. This lady, a Mrs. Carpenter, had learned what a treasure Julia was in our household, and desired her services in her city home.

The morning Julia left us, before any one else was up, she walked to the hill overlooking the Sylvester farm, for a farewell glance at the place that had been the home of her girlhood. No one was astir there; it was a solitary leave-taking; and with the old squire—as we learned later—she left a request that as soon as she could earn and send the money, he would have a proper stone set at her mother's grave. Owing to her father's shiftlessness and poverty, it had been neglected for five years.

"I want to feel sure that mother's grave is cared for," she said. "I may never come back. There isn't much to call me back."

We were all sorry to have her go. At the time, however, none of us, not even Julia herself, dreamed what a momentous journey that was destined to be for her, or in what a singular episode of our country's history she was soon to take part.

CHAPTER II

THROUGH the following winter Julia was with Mrs. Carpenter in Boston. There she made the acquaintance of a Miss Henrietta Stevenson, whose experience of life had been much like her own. They went about together, attended lectures, read books, and, in short, sought self-improvement in every way open to them.

For the first time in her life, Julia had an opportunity to attend a church the pastor of which was an eminent man. This clergyman was the Rev. Edward Everett Hale—then in the midst of his great life-work. His church was just off Washington Street, near where Mrs. Carpenter lived in Union Park Street. To hear his sermons was a great experience for Julia Sylvester. She came to believe in him unreservedly. His practical talks to the young people of his congregation were something for her to treasure up and reflect on during the entire week.

As is well known, Doctor Hale was a man not afraid of life and its problems, even the hardest. In April of that year,—1865,—at one of the mid-week evening meetings, Doctor Hale said:

"A young woman of my congregation has asked my advice in a novel matter. From Washington Territory a young man, named Mercer, has come East recently on a remarkable errand. It appears that there are now very few women in the Pacific Northwest. More women are wanted there, wanted as teachers, housekeepers, dressmakers—in all those vocations where women make life brighter and may make it better.

"Now this young Mercer, hearing that there are

more women than men in New England, has come here with a project to gather together five hundred young women, transport them by steamer round Cape Horn, and convey them to Washington Territory, where he is certain they will find employment, and, it may be, homes of their own to preside over.

"The question that my young parishioner asks is, 'Shall I join this migration westward and venture on this long voyage to a wild new country?' A grave question, certainly, the issues of which are far-reaching and may affect her whole life.

"It would be easier, perhaps safer, to advise her not to go. Yet there are other broader considerations. If the West needs women, why should not the East supply the lack?

"I have inquired about this young man, Mercer. So far as I can learn, there is no harm in him. He may lack experience, but he is straightforward and in earnest. His motives are honest. My friend, William Cullen Bryant of New York, has met him, and approves of his project. General Grant also approves of it, and favors placing the United States steamship *Continental* at his service, to transport the company to the Pacific coast.

"But I want you to see this Mr. Mercer for yourselves, see him and hear him talk of the West. I have invited him to be present at our meeting next Wednesday evening. Come and see him for yourselves. He will describe the country from which he comes, and you will be at liberty to ask him questions."

In response to Doctor Hale's invitation, Mercer appeared the following week at the meeting. At first he surprised his listeners by his extreme youth. Asa K. Mercer was then twenty-two or twenty-three years of age, and seemed no more than nineteen or twenty. He was full of enthusiasm over the great new Puget Sound country and his plan of escorting five hundred young women thither.

He told them frankly about himself. He was born in Bureau County, Illinois, where he spent his boyhood, and where Abraham Lincoln, an old acquaintance of his father's, had often danced him as a child on his big foot, to the old refrain:

"This is the way the ladies ride."

In 1861 he had gone West, over the plains to Seattle; in 1864 he had become an instructor in the embryo University of Washington, which then had eleven students and one small recitation-room. The lack of women and of women's work in every branch and walk of life had at once impressed him. That lack did not need to exist, he had said to himself. In the Eastern States there were, he had heard, more women than men. He would go East, see President Lincoln, and get his help in bringing a numerous company of women out where they were needed and could earn good wages.

With all the impulsiveness of youth he had set off at once, and on his way East had drawn up the following petition to President Lincoln:

Mr. Lincoln, for four years a great and terrible war has raged. Men have fallen by thousands. In the East there are more women than men; but in the far Northwest there are now ten times as many men as women.

The Civil War is over. The national fleet lies idle at the navy-yards. Now in the name of that part of this country which is destined to develop and become the richest and best section of America, in the name of hundreds of sturdy pioneers, in the name of the glorious country of Puget Sound, I ask you, Mr. Lincoln, to give me one or two ships, coaled and manned, and I will furnish provisions to carry five hundred good women from the East to prosperity in the West.

I will promise to land these women safe and sound in the port of Seattle. I will guarantee every one of them a home and honorable employment.

He had landed in New York on the evening of April 14th. President Lincoln was assassinated that night.

Mercer had been stunned. All his hopes had been built upon this friend of his boyhood. He was a stranger in New York. At last, however, going to Boston, he had called on John A. Andrew, the "War Governor" of Massachusetts. Governor Andrew had listened thoughtfully. "This is a bold project," he said. "You go and see Edward Everett Hale. He will know whether it is right or wrong. If any man can properly aid this plan of yours, it is Doctor Hale," he had added, and gave Mercer a letter of introduction.

After Mercer had made his address that evening, Doctor Hale spoke a few words of counsel. "Every young woman," he said, "who is minded to join this emigrant company should ask herself if she can honorably sever her home ties. Are there those at home who are dependent on you, who will suffer or be greatly grieved if you go? Have you home duties here or responsibilities that must be abandoned if you go? These are questions that each must ask herself and answer for herself. If there is no one dependent on you, needing you here, I see no valid reason why you should not go."

To these straightforward words from Doctor Hale, in the old Union Park Church that evening, there were no more interested listeners than Julia and her friend Henrietta. At the close of the meeting they walked homeward for a time in silence.

"What do you think of it?" Henrietta said, at last.

"I am going," Julia said, firmly.

"Then so am I!" Henrietta exclaimed.

But Mercer met with difficulties from the start. The United States government, impressed by the advice of General Grant, desired indeed to aid Mercer's plan; but designing men in New York and San

Francisco were already scheming to profit from the voyage. They brought about delay after delay throughout the summer and fall of 1865; January, 1866, arrived, and the expedition had not yet started.

Julia and Henrietta had gone to New York on September 8th, in the expectation of sailing in two days; but they were compelled to go on boarding there, week after week, till their little savings were almost exhausted.

An enemy of Mercer, who wished to get possession of the *Continental,* published in a New York paper a malicious story accusing him of intent to deceive the young women. So novel a plan was, of course, open to suspicion. Many of the young women now became alarmed, and thought it safer to withdraw and return to their homes. Thus the company was seriously reduced in numbers, and Mercer was driven nearly to despair. Not only had he invested every dollar he possessed in this enterprise, but he had also borrowed heavily from his relatives and friends to pay the many expenses of the long passage. Profit for himself he seems not to have cared for. It was his great idea that he cared for; he was interested chiefly in seeing it succeed.

Henrietta was so frightened by this newspaper attack on Mercer that she wished to go home, and besought Julia to do so. Julia, however, was made of firmer stuff. She questioned Mercer, and drew her own conclusions from his frank, honest replies. To all that Henrietta said, Julia answered, "I believe in Doctor Hale and I believe in Mr. Mercer. I'm going."

Finally she persuaded Henrietta.

The *Continental* sailed on January 6th. But it is a fact that many of those inexperienced girls hardly knew where they were going, how far, or by what route.

"We're voyaging, voyaging,
But where we hardly know;
'Tis to a new, fair land, they say,
Where wheat and roses grow."

The above is a stanza of a humorous rimed chronicle, still remembered, that Julia Sylvester, Henrietta Stevenson and other "Mercer maidens" strung together to pass the time and ward off homesickness on that long and memorable voyage from New York round Cape Horn and up the west coast of America.

Sometimes, perhaps, they sang it to keep up their spirits. For at times the whole company was woefully homesick and beset by terrifying misgivings as to the future. "I used to wake in the morning with a jump when I thought where I was and what I was doing," Julia said to me that evening, when I visited her at her home in Seattle. "And poor Henrietta! She and I shared the same stateroom on the *Continental,* and every few nights I would hear her crying in her sleep; she had dreadful dreams from brooding over our prospects."

The *Continental* encountered a storm the first day out. Being a small vessel, at least compared with the ocean liners of to-day, she rolled badly, and for thirty-six hours the passengers were nearly all seasick. The weather, moreover, was bitterly cold and uncomfortable. Mercer appears to have done everything he could to cheer his passengers.

But at last the storm at sea abated; the violent motion ceased; the *Continental* entered the Gulf Stream, and beautiful days dawned. They had made a sudden transition from the bleak rigors of winter to the genial warmth of spring. Venturing on deck, the girls were thrilled with the joy and novelty of mild, bright seas. Novel, too, for them were the schools of flying-fish that rose suddenly from the

waves and went gliding away in the air as the steamer rushed among them; and even more strangely novel was the blazing phosphorescence of the seas at night.

Early one morning the two friends saw for the first time the plumed palms of some small West Indian island that the ship was passing at a distance. So beautiful the island looked that Henrietta was moved then and there to add a stanza to their chronicle:

> "'Tis like a glimpse of Paradise,
> Seen from the Sea of Life,
> A realm of calm and peaceful rest
> Beyond this vale of strife."

And now the ship entered the zone of the trade-winds, with its metallic blue seas. Here again the steamer rolled a great deal, and the voyagers were kept in their staterooms much of the time. It was warm, and soon became too warm; the dark-colored winter clothing that the girls had worn when they went aboard at New York grew hot and burdensome. For now they were near the equator, with noontide suns directly overhead and the deck hot to their feet.

To amuse them and keep them in good spirits, the youthful patron of the expedition devised a nautical ceremony to celebrate their crossing the "line," something like that in vogue among sailors, but with the rougher tricks omitted. That day there was a great deal of fun aboard the *Continental,* and at dinner they had several strange dishes that Neptune was said to have sent up to the young ladies from his marine kitchen below.

On the twelfth day of the voyage the ship was off the Brazilian ports of Pernambuco and Bahia. Early the following morning Henrietta made a discovery that filled her with pity, but resulted in some laughter at her expense.

Going on deck before sunrise, and looking off to the eastward, she espied a raft with people on it—a raft of shipwrecked mariners, she felt sure. In great anxiety, she ran to knock at the door of Captain Winsor's stateroom.

"O Captain, there must have been a wreck!" she cried. "I can see three poor fellows clinging to a raft, and the waves washing over them! Do save them!"

Smiling at her earnestness, the captain stepped forth with his glass, took a look at the hapless men, and then laughed heartily.

"Don't worry about those chaps!" he exclaimed. "That's a catamaran, and those are Pernambuco fishermen. They sometimes go off a hundred miles to sea on just such little rafts as that. Why, you couldn't drown one of those fellows any more than you could drown a seal!"

After passing the "line," the weather grew even warmer, for it was summer in the southern hemisphere. The North Star and the Great Dipper had sunk completely from sight beneath the northern horizon; and the four bright stars of the Southern Cross rose high in the heavens every night. They gave Henrietta and Julia a strange sensation of having reached some distant quarter of the universe, where even the stars were unfamiliar.

They were now eighteen days out from New York, —eighteen weeks, it seemed to Julia and Henrietta,— and more than five thousand miles from the home port. Early on the morning of January 25th they saw five peaks emerging from the ocean on the westward horizon.

"Those are the famous Organ Mountains of Rio!" Mercer exclaimed. "That's Brazil. We shall be in the Bay of Rio de Janeiro by ten o'clock this morning." He added that the *Continental* would be in Rio for five days at least, to take aboard a consid-

erable cargo of coffee for San Francisco, to help pay for the coal and other expenses of the voyage.

Slowly the distant green peaks rose from the sea, then the shore-line and the city. How good the land looked! Under the inspiration of it Henrietta added another stanza to the chronicle:

"From out the sea another land
Now rises into view;
The 'Organs' swell like sugar-loaves,
'Tis white with churches, too."

This last line was prompted by the numerous spires and cathedral towers and the white edifices that crown the Gloria Heights, all in plain view as ships enter Rio harbor. It led Julia to exclaim:

"How good the people must be here,
Where churches thus abound!
In such a godly town as this
A rogue could scarce be found."

Mercer laughed, then chimed in with a stanza of his own:

"'Just wait a bit! Don't be too sure,
But watch your purse!' cried he.
'For *picaros* with little hooks
Are thick as thick can be.'"

"And nimble as a flea," he added, as an afterthought.

As a matter of fact, however, the voyagers encountered something in Rio quite different from *picaros*.

CHAPTER III

TWO days passed before the *Continental,* which was to take on coffee, was allowed to land at Rio de Janeiro. First a quarantine boat came out; then a revenue cutter brought the steamer in to the quay. Rio was in an excited state of mind. The war between Brazil and Paraguay had actually begun. In the city cholera was prevalent.

If the weather had been hot at sea, it was doubly so in port. Few of the girls ventured ashore, on account of their dread of the cholera. Moreover, to their New England eyes the place looked strange and unattractive. They did not like the looks of the houses; with their grated windows and their doors hung on heavy iron hinges, they looked like so many jails to them. But finally Julia, Henrietta, and a young woman named Elizabeth Brown, were impelled by the heat and their heavy clothing to venture ashore to visit the shops. Mercer obligingly offered to go with them. They walked some distance without finding a shop where ready-made dresses for women were sold. At last, however, they came upon a shop where gowns of white cotton fabric were for sale, at eight milreis. A Brazilian reis was then equivalent to about a mill of our money, and a milreis—a thousand reis—to nearly a dollar; but all Brazilian paper had depreciated, and a milreis in reality amounted to but forty-six cents. Julia and Henrietta had each ten dollars in American silver. Each of the three girls purchased a white gown for three dollars and sixty-eight cents.

With their new gowns, wrapped in yellow paper packages, the Americans started to find their way back to the ship. While passing through a small

plaza, they were suddenly saluted by a volley of large wax balls, filled with pink starch powder, flung at them from a balcony overhead by roguish students of a *collegio,* or school. The missiles were light, but as large as baseballs, and were thrown with such good aim that all four of the travelers were hit simultaneously. The waxen shells, bursting as they struck, covered them with pink powder and filled the air with dust.

So unexpected was the attack, that Henrietta and Elizabeth screamed outright. Even the more self-possessed Julia was much startled. Shouts of laughter burst forth from the balcony, and indeed, from all round the plaza. Then ball after ball came flying from all points of the compass, and burst about them on the pavement, till the whole place was made dim by the pink dust.

"Don't mind. Don't be frightened," Mercer said. "It's merely a joke of the young scamps of the town."

The joke, however, had only begun. Flight after flight of the miniature bombs came whizzing down. In every window were people abundantly provided with them. The laughter rose to screams of glee. Mercer broke into a run, and clasping tight their precious yellow packages, the girls scudded after him.

Still they were bombarded. The whole population seemed to be at the windows. Shouts rose along the street; and to the greater bewilderment of the persecuted Americans, every one appeared to know just what had happened, and to be ready to join in the sport. With the laughter arose cries of *"Intrudo! Intrudo!"*

The bombshells of dry starch powder were not the only missiles. Others, containing a liquid that smelled like cologne water, splashed and spattered the fugitives.

First down one narrow street, then another, they fled in their effort to find the one leading to the place where the *Continental* lay. Still the tumult pursued

them. The cry of *"Intrudo!"* had roused every *gamin;* when the fugitives came into a worse quarter of the town, near the docks, grinning black youngsters, armed with long squirt-guns, popped from alleys, and discharged jets of water after them.

How so many of the young scamps came to have these long tin squirts, and to be so prompt to use them, puzzled Mercer. His indignation rose. First after one, then another of the young tormentors, he rushed, and at last, capturing one of the squirt-guns, he used it as a weapon, and belabored the miscreants till their laughter turned to yells of dismay.

At last the three girls reached the wharf, ran hastily up the gangplank, and came safe aboard the ship, but their appearance astonished all their shipmates.

They and Mercer were streaked by the wet pink powder of the "bombs" with which the fusillade had opened. How they had chanced to draw on themselves such a storm of powder and water remained a mystery until the next day, when Mercer learned from a coffee merchant on shore that *"intrudo"* is a kind of game, commonly played at this season of the year by the people of Rio, who practise it on each other as well as on visiting strangers.

The next day the *Continental* sailed, with four thousand sacks of coffee aboard and her bunkers well filled with coal. For now Cape Horn had to be doubled, and Valparaiso, on the other side of South America,—four thousand miles away,—was the next port of call.

The girls put on their new white dresses—and caught cold! A gale came out of the south. The *Continental* began rolling and pitching tremendously; the weather turned so raw that the shivering passengers hastily changed their new Rio raiment for their old winter clothing. For now the *Continental* was reaching higher latitudes, south. Indeed, such stormy weather set in that Captain Winsor decided not to

risk the passage round Cape Horn, but to take the vessel through the Strait of Magellan and the Cockburn Channel.

They entered the strait on February 18th, but such thick fogs and driving mists enshrouded them day after day that they got only transient glimpses of the towering dark mountains that wall in those long, devious channels between Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego. Three weeks she spent in threading the foggy passages of the strait.

Then for a week or more the *Continental,* proceeding slowly under low steam, nosed along through the fog by day and lay at anchor by night, till she gained more open waters under clearer skies, north of the Chonos Archipelago. Her coal ran low again; and four days later, in order to replenish the empty bins, she put into the small Chilean port of Lota, where an inferior quality of coal is mined.

On the way up the coast, which lies in the very shadow of the mighty Andean range, Julia and Henrietta, for the first time in their lives, saw volcanoes—Osorno, Calbuco and Tronador—smoking to the skies. Calbuco was in eruption; a vast pillar of black vapor was rolling slowly upward, and at night the red glare from the crater shone on the clouds above it.

For hours these girls from far-off New England watched the strange spectacle in silent awe. It seemed to them that they had indeed voyaged to the ends of the earth, where the entire face of nature wore a different and a menacing aspect.

One morning, at Lota, while watching the strangely clad people loading the coal in baskets, they heard an ominous roaring, which was followed by a heavy jolt; the ship quivered at the pier. Immediately a cloud obscured the hills and mountains. The girls learned that this cloud was dust, and that it was caused by an earthquake that had occurred along the coast. Altogether, they felt much relieved when the ship put to sea again.

Two days later, when the *Continental* rounded Point Angeles, to enter the roadstead of Valparaiso, a black steamer that lay off the port, with smoke rising from its funnels, got under way and came directly toward them. Captain Winsor was plainly disturbed.

"I wonder what that fellow wants of us!" he exclaimed, and hastily got his glass. "I can't make out his colors." The captain passed his glass to Mercer.

"It's a red and yellow flag, with some sort of emblem," Mercer said. "Now what nation can that be?"

"Don't know. But he carries guns, big guns, too. It's a war-vessel of some sort, and he means to overhaul us." Thereupon he ordered the American colors to be run up fore and aft.

Vomiting clouds of smoke from both funnels, the black stranger came on. "You don't suppose it's a pirate?" said Mercer.

Captain Winsor shook his head. "Can't make him out at all," he declared.

Meanwhile the alarm had spread among the passengers. From one to another ran the startling cry, "A pirate ship!" Terror that was almost panic fell upon them; and then the stranger, now within a mile of them, rounded to and fired a solid shot across the *Continental's* bows hardly a hundred yards away.

The puff of smoke, the blaze of the cannon and the skipping ball completed the panic of the frightened emigrants. Some of them screamed, for they expected that the ship was going to be sunk then and there by the ominous stranger.

But Mercer had now caught a clearer glimpse of the strange vessel's colors. "It's the flag of Spain!" he exclaimed.

"That means heave to and be searched!" muttered the captain.

"But what business has Spain to search us?" Mercer exclaimed, in indignation.

"More than I can tell you, son. But it's a case where might makes right."

Captain Winsor hastily signaled to the engine-room, gave an order to the helmsman, and brought the *Continental* round, to await further developments.

Immediately a smart boat, manned by sailors in white duck with red facings, put off from the war-ship and pulled rapidly to the *Continental.* A very courteous young lieutenant came up the side and bowed profoundly, first to Captain Winsor, then to the young women. In slow, difficult, but most polite English, he expressed the regret of his commander and his country thus to incommode a ship of the glorious United States. But the case unhappily was urgent. War had suddenly arisen between his country and misguided Chile. Valparaiso was blockaded, and was to be bombarded the next day. It would be impossible to allow the *Continental* to enter the port.

The name of his vessel, he added, was the *Numancia,* Commander Mendez Nunez, who sent his most profound apologies to Captain Winsor and his passengers. With further farewell bows and flourishes, the polite young officer descended the side.

"Well, well, of course if they are going to bombard the place, we don't want to be there," Captain Winsor remarked. "The farther we get away from it the better."

Accordingly, the *Continental* proceeded on its voyage up the coast. As a matter of fact, Valparaiso was bombarded a few days later. A large part of the city was burned, with a loss of more than fourteen million dollars.

In commemoration of this episode, Mercer added a stanza to the already long chronicle:

"A Spanish ship has brought us to,
Just outside Valparaiso.
That grand old port (Boohoo! Boohoo!)
Will never glad our eyes, O!"

For six days the *Continental* steamed steadily northward, pouring the blackest of smoke from its funnels. The soft Lota coal seemed to dissolve rather than burn in the furnaces, and to produce more smoke than fire. In blessed contrast to this grimy cloud were the snow-white peaks of the Andes, now always in sight to the eastward: Huascaran, Aconcagua, Cotopaxi, Chimborazo and a hundred others, as day after day the long range unfolded itself to view.

"It was there," Mercer exclaimed, "on that grand table-land, that Manco Capac and Azilla taught the early arts and founded the ancient empire of Peru, which Pizarro and his fellow gold-hunters so brutally destroyed! Off there the Incas reigned and reared their temples to the sun. That lofty plateau is now the grave of a vanished civilization.

"I was a pedagogue once," Mercer added, laughing in explanation of this outburst. "For a whole year, before I started East, I was president, professor, dean, and all the rest, of the University of Washington at Seattle. But don't let my many titles startle you. I had but eight students, and heard them all recite in one small room."

The weather had now turned hot again, hotter even than on the other side of South America. Once more Julia, Henrietta and Elizabeth Brown donned their white dresses, although these did not remain white long under the falling soot from the smoke of the steamer.

The bursting of a steam-pipe and something wrong with the cross-heads made repairs necessary. So the vessel put in at the Galapagos Islands, and lay at anchor for two days in the roadstead at Charles Island, abandoned except by a few fishermen, runaway sailors, and refugees from justice. The interior is a high plateau, where many cattle, once domesticated, but now wild and dangerous, find pasture. The beaches are frequented by many large turtles; hence the Spanish name, Galapagos.

The Galapagos Islands lie almost on the equator. On the second evening Mercer expressed much whimsical solicitude about getting all the young ladies back over the "line." "Here you all are, down in the southern hemisphere," he cried, "but to-morrow I shall have to get you back, up over the equator again! You all remember what a time we had when we crossed into the southern half of the world. But that was easy, for it was down-hill. Now we have to climb back up over the line.

"But perhaps I shall work it out somehow," he said, as he finally bade them good night.

The next morning, at breakfast, Mercer was missing; the steward said that he had gone ashore before daylight with three sailors. "He wanted me to tell you that he had had a dream. In his dream he was told to go ashore and get a 'Galapagos pony' for the young ladies to ride over the line on!"

They all waited eagerly for Mercer's return. After several hours had gone by, they began to be apprehensive about his safety.

At about ten o'clock, however, the boat was seen returning. Neither pony nor horse was visible, and the girls felt some disappointment. But when the boat came alongside, they saw in it a round, gray, ponderous object, as large as the top of a hogshead tub.

"Looks like a turtle!" some one exclaimed.

And a turtle it proved to be—a huge one, weighing fully two hundred pounds. The sailors had to rig a "whip"; then they hoisted the creature on deck and turned it on its back.

Mercer made haste to introduce the captive. "He is not pretty, I grant you," he said, "but he is strong. He is not swift, but he is sure-footed. You can see his feet for yourselves. Also his back mightily resembles a saddle. I'm persuaded that he is a safe and a strong beast, fit to carry you all back across the line. The ceremonies will begin at high noon."

Across the deck, from rail to rail, Mercer made a broad mark with chalk—the equator; then putting a rope halter about the turtle's neck, he incited the reptile to waddle back and forth across the line.

The strength of large turtles is well known; this one, it was found, could carry a man on its back with ease. The nautical ceremony on this occasion consisted in each young lady's taking a standing ride on the turtle's back across the line. There was much laughter and many shrieks as, one by one, they rode over the chalk-line, to the tune of the following improvised chant:

"Oh, come across the line!
Come across, my bonny!
Don't balk, you needn't walk;
Ride over on the pony!"

"A great responsibility is off my mind!" Mercer exclaimed. "You are now all back home in the northern hemisphere. But what shall we do with the pony?"

Some one suggested turtle soup; but Henrietta, Elizabeth, and a dozen others cried out against the suggestion. In the end it was agreed to inscribe the date and the word "Pony" on the animal's shell, then turn him free again. When, after considerable labor on Mercer's part, this was done, the big turtle was permitted to take a header from the deck into the sea, where for some moments they saw it swimming swiftly away in the clear green depths.

Turtles are believed to live to a very great age; Mercer and the girls hoped that future turtle-hunters, seeing the inscription on its back, might be moved to spare its life in consideration of its services on April 6, 1866.

Five days out from the Galapagos Islands, heavy weather, with driving squalls of rain, came on; and once more those white gowns from Rio were discarded for the darker, warmer garments of home.

In place of the sear, brown coasts of Mexico, there now appeared the green hills of California. On April

19th Santa Catalina was sighted. "San Francisco to-morrow," Mercer said. "To-morrow we shall enter the Golden Gate."

RIDING A GALAPAGOS PONY

CHAPTER IV

"THE Golden Gate!"

What visions of wealth that magic phrase carried with it in those early days of California!

On that April morning in 1866 Mercer and his company saw a narrow strait between bold headlands, somber in the shadow of rolling fogs that, lifting here and there, gave glimpses of lofty Mount Tamalpais in the north.

Slowly the *Continental* steamed into this grand portal, past Alcatraz Island, Angel Island, Tiburon Point. The whole broad bay now opened to view, and disclosed San Francisco on its inner shore. It was a noble panorama, worthy of this new land of promise, and doubly welcome to the eyes of these voyagers after their ninety-six days on shipboard.

Grave anxieties, however, were now before them. Trouble met them at the very threshold of the golden city, trouble in the form of the same men who had beset Mercer and his enterprise in New York. The government had wished to place the steamship at Mercer's disposal on most favorable terms; but these unscrupulous men, taking advantage of his inexperience, had involved him in a transportation contract impossible of fulfilment. This contract they now declared void. The *Continental* would proceed no farther, they said; the voyage ended there; Mercer and his company would have to make their way to Oregon and Washington as best they could.

Mercer felt that so far as he was concerned, he could make his own way anywhere. But what of this great company of young women whom he had pledged

his honor to transport to Seattle, and who looked to him to provide them with homes and honorable employment? Most of them were without means, and were now about to be turned adrift in San Francisco.

He was without further resources himself; he had sunk everything he had in this voyage. He had but three dollars left in his purse. He had expected that the steamship would go on up the coast to Seattle, and land the company there. But now this further transportation would cost two thousand dollars. There were no vessels immediately available for his use; and to support and care for so numerous a party in San Francisco would cost at least two hundred dollars a day.

Mercer knew the Governor of Washington Territory. He spent two dollars and a half of his remaining money on a telegram to him, that described briefly the straits he was in, and asked for a loan sufficient to defray expenses.

Four hours later a reply message of more than a hundred words arrived from the governor, "collect." It warmly praised Mercer and his effort, but utterly ignored his appeal. The cost of this message was seven dollars and fifty cents. Mercer was unable to pay it, and it was only by courtesy of an official of the telegraph company that he was made aware of the contents of the telegram.

He visited every reputable hotel in the city, stated the case fully, and asked accommodations, which he promised to pay for sixty days later. It is not strange, perhaps, that such a request for so large a company was refused.

Mercer was at a loss to know what to do; at the latest they would be obliged to leave the *Continental* the next day. So far he had said nothing of the situation to the young women, for he did not wish to alarm them; but now he took Julia into his confi-

dence, perhaps because he appreciated her practical qualities. Julia had already noticed that he was in trouble, and was not wholly surprised at what he told her.

"Mr. Mercer," she said, "the best you can do is to land us here and let us seek employment for ourselves in San Francisco."

"But I have promised to take you to Washington Territory!" he exclaimed. "San Francisco is not so good a place for you. I should feel that I was doing wrong by you!"

"But if it is the best you can do, we must accept it."

"Not yet. Not till I have tried every chance. I will apply to the commandant at the Presidio for tents to shelter you."

But government "red tape" blocked the way; the commandant had no power to grant such an application.

In San Francisco there was a young man named Benjamin Dunham, who was working as reporter for one of the city papers. "Ben Dun," as he was familiarly known among his associates, came from Rhode Island, and had been a student at Bowdoin College, but during his sophomore year had been suspended for six weeks on account of a prank of the baseball nine. Baseball was then in its infancy, and the sophomore nine at Bowdoin, of which Ben was captain, had gone one day, without permission, to play against the Exeter Academy boys. Thereupon the faculty took drastic action, and suspended the entire nine.

That was not the first time that Ben had caused the college embarrassment. He roomed in the house of a very worthy but indigent old lady, just off the college campus. This old lady had had trouble with a telegraph company that insisted on digging a hole and setting up a large, unsightly pole in her yard,

near her very door. It sadly disfigured her little place, and was a source of great annoyance to her.

The pole might well enough have been placed twenty feet farther along the sidewalk. But as she had little influence, no one took her part—no one, at least, except Ben Dun. His sense of fair play was stirred. He took down the pole himself, at dead of night, cut it in two with an ax, and attaching a rope to the pieces, dragged them off and threw them into the Androscoggin River.

This kind but ill-judged action was brought home to him. The company, however, did not care to prosecute him publicly; they feared the odium they would incur if the facts were known; but they complained to the faculty of the college, and demanded that Ben be expelled.

The faculty was divided in opinion. A majority of the professors, however, could not be brought to vote for Ben's expulsion. Secretly they sympathized with what he had done.

Ben therefore went scot-free at that time, but the baseball escapade resulted in his being sent home. There he encountered his father's anger. His father, a lawyer in Providence, expressed such outspoken disapproval of his son's performances that Ben determined to relieve his family of the irritation of his presence. He went to the Pacific coast by way of the Isthmus of Panama, and began reporting news items for a San Francisco newspaper on his own responsibility. He showed so much energy and aptitude that after three weeks the paper engaged him as a regular member of its staff.

While tramping about town that morning, in quest of news, Ben Dun overheard Mercer talking with the proprietor of the International Hotel. He caught the words "injustice"—"steamship *Continental*"—"wrong." His news instinct was stirred. Hasten-

ing to the wharves, he got a boat, rowed to the steamship, and tried to go aboard. Captain Winsor looked down the ship's side, demanded his business, and on learning it, gruffly bade him begone. Thereupon Dunham sheered off and rowed round the ship. Seeing a line hanging down astern, he made fast to it; he had noticed a girl near the wheel-house above. This chanced to be Julia, who was thinking the situation over, apart from the others.

After trying the line gently, Ben Dunham went up, hand over hand, but so quietly that Julia was startled when his face suddenly appeared before her.

"Good morning!" he said, politely.

Julia drew back, and looked at him in silence.

"I learn there is some 'injustice' here," said Dunham. "Please tell me what it is. I saw a young man from this steamer at the International Hotel, but was unable to speak with him. Please tell me what is wrong here."

Dunham's face was prepossessing. Julia thought that possibly he might aid them. "You had better see Mr. Mercer when he returns," she said.

"Thank you!"

At that moment Captain Winsor's heavy step sounded on the deck behind Julia.

"What, you here again, young fellow!" he shouted, and leaping forward, he aimed a blow with his fist at Dunham's head.

That young man, however, avoided it by sliding down the line. He laughed up into the captain's red and angry face. "Thanks!" he said. "A miss is as good as a mile! See you again, captain."

Then, casting off, he pulled away. An hour of waiting and watching on the wharves enabled him to intercept Mercer on his return from the Presidio. As a result of the interview, Ben Dun's paper that afternoon contained a ringing account of the persecutions from which Mercer had suffered.

The wide-awake reporter did not stop with that. Going to Mr. Wygnant, the proprietor of the International Hotel, he persuaded him to reconsider his refusal of Mercer's request.

"San Francisco must never go on record as denying hospitality to all those nice girls from the East!" Dunham urged. "I know our people. The whole city would cry out! As for Mercer, my paper will be responsible for him."

As a result, the whole company bade farewell to the *Continental* that afternoon, and was lodged at the International Hotel, which they filled to overflowing.

The next day the International was literally besieged by householders of the city in quest of domestic help.

A delegation of ladies also called to urge the immigrant young women not to go farther north, but to remain and settle in San Francisco. Washington Territory, these ladies asserted, was still a rough and uncivilized region. "Remain here," they said. "California is the place for you. Homes are waiting for you all. Stay right here in San Francisco. Situations at good wages will be found for you before to-morrow noon."

It was not strange that several of the company were attracted by so friendly an offer. Why go farther? In considerable excitement the girls met in the hotel parlor to talk the matter over. Many were in favor of remaining, for who could tell what hardships might not be before them in the less well settled territory of the Northwest?

Poor Mercer was in distress again. His whole flock seemed likely to take wing and leave him to return to Seattle alone. What would his friends in Washington say to him? He stood by the parlor door, the picture of loneliness and desolation, yet too magnanimous to say a word to dissuade them, or remind them of their obligations to him.

There was one person in the company, however, who had not forgotten. In great indignation Julia sat and listened to what was said in favor of San Francisco. Even Henrietta thought it well to remain there, and so did Elizabeth Brown; but Julia felt moved to remonstrate. She made a forcible speech.

"When I joined Mr. Mercer's party," she said, "and accepted his offer, I promised to go with him to Washington Territory. I thought we all did. Didn't we? Are we going to break our word to him like this?"

"Let Mercer take us there, then, as he agreed to!" one shrill voice shouted. "What are we waiting here for?"

"But the fault is not his. He has done the best he could for us, all through this long voyage," Julia replied. "Have we no gratitude? Are we going to desert as good a friend as he has been, just because he is embarrassed? Why is he embarrassed? Isn't it because he has paid all these large expenses for us? He has stood by us. Let's stand by him.

"Why, after all he has done for us, I will go to Washington Territory with him if I have to walk!"

Ben Dun, who had come in to urge the matter in behalf of the San Francisco ladies, clapped his hands enthusiastically, and cried, "Good for you! You're the right sort!"

In fact, the tide turned. The whole company, with two exceptions, voted to go on with Mercer, if transportation could be found.

Mercer meanwhile was doing what he could. The loss of the *Continental* had been a severe blow; but after six days more at San Francisco, he succeeded in arranging a loan of funds for payment of their hotel bills and for the passage northward in the ship *George Washington,* a lumber-carrying vessel then plying between San Francisco and ports on Puget Sound.

Dunham had tried to get an introduction to Julia and her friends, who naturally felt some curiosity concerning one who had labored so energetically in their behalf. Julia, although at first she had been inclined to regard him as a rather officious young man, and did not wholly approve of the unceremonious way in which he had climbed up a line to address her, felt that they all were deeply indebted to him.

He called at the hotel; but the young women were out at the time, seeing the new town; and the next day an urgent news assignment from his paper took him to Sacramento for a week or more. They sailed before he returned; but he sent a card to Mercer, to be given to Julia, on the back of which he had written, "I admire your principles, but I am sorry you are not going to remain in San Francisco."

Hardly was the old lumber ship outside the Golden Gate before they all became painfully aware of the difference between a comfortable steamship, like the *Continental,* and a badly outfitted sailing vessel. Rough, stormy weather came on; it was bitterly cold all the way up the coast to Cape Flattery; and the fare at table was poor.

During that long, chilly week at sea there were a good many who openly regretted that they had declined the offer of comfortable situations in San Francisco. "Oh, why did we leave California!" they murmured to each other, with wan faces.

Cold looked the snow-clad Olympics on that early May morning when, rolling heavily on the swell, the old *George Washington* doubled Cape Flattery and bore away eastward through the long, broad straits of Juan de Fuca. All day, past Port Angeles and the infant Port Townsend, the slow old ship held its course, and ever to the southward loomed those lofty, snow-clad pinnacles.

But a change was at hand. The next morning the ship turned southward into Puget Sound, past Port

Townsend and past the bold headlands that are now crowned by strong forts. The rolling motion ceased, as if by magic. Warmer breezes, wafting odors of burning fir and cedar, blew gently from the shores; on either hand was unfolded the panorama of dark green islands and forest-clad mountains.

With joyous shouts, Mercer summoned them all on deck. "Look round you!" he cried. "Isn't it beautiful? Welcome to our inland sea! Welcome to the little Mediterranean of the Northwest! Isn't this a grand new home that you are coming to?"

Even the most doubtful of the company felt the thrill of his enthusiasm, and began to share it. "See that lovely, pink-tinted cone over yonder!" Mercer exclaimed, pointing eastward. "That's Mount Baker, eleven thousand feet high, a true 'Pillar of Atlas,' all girt round with glaciers. And look away down there in the southeast. Did you ever see a more beautiful peak? That's Mount Rainier, almost fifteen thousand feet high; only one mountain in the United States is higher. The Indians called it Mount Tacoma—the Mountain that was God."

It was a spectacle long to be remembered. Nowhere on that whole long voyage of sixteen thousand miles had they beheld scenery so grand and yet so beautiful. Even distant Mount St. Helens and Mount Adams were visible, far in the south, that day; to the westward rose the whole long line of the Olympics.

Warmer grew the breezes offshore, and shortly after two o'clock the *George Washington* entered Elliott Bay, in front of those fine heights now crowned by the city of Seattle.

Immediately the young women were made aware of what young Seattle could do in the way of welcome.

CHAPTER V

THE old *George Washington* had no sooner dropped anchor than there was a stir all along the water-front. Bells rang, sawmill whistles blew, fleets of boats and canoes put off from the shore. It seemed, indeed, as if, after the hearty fashion of those early times, all Seattle had come out to greet the voyagers. The young women were at first rather startled by the extent of the public demonstration in honor of their arrival.

Mercer, however, permitted no undue exuberance or excessive familiarity. A few personal friends he introduced, but he skilfully protected his charges from the importunate hospitality of the crowd. He provided temporary quarters for all the girls in groups of two, three or four—that they might not be homesick—among such of his many acquaintances as had homes of their own. From first to last, indeed, he was the thoughtful, kind older brother of them all. Not one did he neglect or forget.

They did not long need this fraternal care, however; Seattle clamored for them. Indeed, there were not half enough of them to meet the demand for teachers, dressmakers, saleswomen and housekeepers. There is no doubt that they filled a real want.

For Henrietta Stevenson, Elizabeth Brown and three others who had had experience as teachers, Mercer found engagements the next day in the Seattle schools. Many others secured situations at once, either at Seattle or in the then infant towns of Everett, Tacoma, Olympia, Port Orchard, Bellingham and Whidby Island. Two went as far south as Portland, and one to Salem, Oregon, below the Columbia River.

The merit of Mercer's great idea was amply proved. In spite of disheartening obstacles, he had carried it through to success.

For Julia he reserved one of the best engagements within his gift; on the second evening after they had landed at Seattle, he called to speak with her about it. More than once during the long voyage he had relied on her good judgment and sturdy loyalty; and the position that he now offered her would have associated her with him at the youthful university on the shores of Lake Washington.

She had grown to admire Mercer's cheery disposition, his enthusiasm, his unselfishness, and his high ideals. In this, as in other matters, it would not have been like her to be otherwise than straightforward and frank. So in declining this offer, Julia had an especially mortifying moment, for she was obliged to confess her lack of education.

"Mr. Mercer," she said, "I see you think I am something more than I am. What you offer is beyond me. I have no education. I hardly know the simplest rules of arithmetic or grammar."

Mercer was at first incredulous. "I will risk you!" he exclaimed.

"I must not impose on you in any such way!" Julia replied. "You have been too good a friend for me to do such a thing, and disappoint you later. No, all I am good for is housework, gardening, or the care of a farm. If you hear of a place of that kind, I shall be glad to fill it, but I will not begin life out here under any false pretenses."

She then asked Mercer's advice about going to Portland, an older town than Seattle.

"No, no!" he said. "You stay here. Seattle's the coming town of the Northwest. Don't leave us. I will get you a place, and a good one, too."

That night, for the first time since leaving home, Julia shed a few tears.

Mercer called again the next morning. "Didn't you say yesterday that you understood gardening?" he asked.

"Yes, I do know a little something about a garden."

"Then I have just the place for you, if you don't mind having an odd employer."

"How odd is he?"

"As odd as 'Dick's hatband,'" Mercer said. "But he is a good sort. I like him. His name is Mantor, Ezra Mantor, and he came originally from your part of the country, I believe."

"Does he live in Seattle?"

"Oh, yes, here or near by; he and his wife live in a queer, long shanty of a house at a clearing over near Lake Washington. The Indians burned them out a few years ago, but they have rebuilt their place. Mantor has made a lot of money in the lumber business. He owns half a dozen sawmills, and ships lumber down the coast, and even exports it to Australia. He puts his profits back into timber lands and house-lots; and he talks of nothing but Seattle and the future of Washington Territory. His wife doesn't talk at all. She has aphonia, and cannot speak a loud word. They have no children. If Washington Territory prospers as they think it is going to, those two people will be millionaires, for they own land all round here."

"But the gardening, Mr. Mercer, where does that come in?"

"Mantor has a new idea. Up to the present time we haven't thought much about fruit or farm crops or agriculture. We have been too busy fighting Indians, and lumbering and trading. But Ezra Mantor is shrewd enough to see that we need something more to make a great state. He says we have the best soil and the best climate in the world, and that we can raise anything and everything we want here. So

this spring he wants to start an experimental garden, and plant all kinds of vegetables. They have two Indian women; and Ezra has got hold of a Chinaman from San Francisco. But those squaws know nothing of gardening, and the Chinaman is so afraid of the Indians that he is in hiding half the time."

"But what about the Indians?" Julia asked. "Are they dangerous?"

"Oh, no. Not now. We had trouble with them ten years ago. They burned a part of Seattle. But that's all over and past. There are a lot of them here yet—Snoqualmies and Nesquallies. But they are pretty peaceable, as a rule. Mantor has an office down at the wharves. Shall we go down and see him?"

"If you think I could fill such a place," Julia replied.

On reaching the water-front, Mercer led the way in and out among huge piles of lumber, to a massive shed of squared logs. He knocked at a door, formed from a single polished fir board, and bearing the inscription:

EZRA MANTOR,
LUMBER.

"Come in!" cried a high-pitched voice.

On entering, they saw, sitting at a ledger, a lean, elderly man, with a long, smooth face, high cheek-bones and profuse gray hair. He jumped down from his stool, and cried, "How are you, Asa? Heard yesterday you were back with a whole ship-load of nice girls from the East!"

"Yes, Uncle Ezra," Mercer said. "And I didn't forget you. I have brought the very best one in the whole ship-load to take charge of that new garden of yours. Miss Sylvester, this is Mr. Mantor. Miss Sylvester knows a garden when she sees it."

Ezra Mantor's lean face broke into a quizzical

smile. For a moment he regarded Julia keenly over the tops of his round-rimmed spectacles. "You're a good, healthy-looking girl," he said, and shook hands. "You can read, I suppose?"

"Yes," Julia replied, somewhat taken aback by such a question.

"Let me hear you read this, then," said Mantor, and he handed her a freshly printed circular. "The first few lines, now."

Julia read the opening paragraph: "Certain learned writers tell us that the Garden of Eden was in Asia, near the mouth of the Euphrates River; but that is more than doubtful. My own idea is that it was on the shores of Puget Sound, in Washington Territory. The traces of that ancient garden are, of course, obliterated; but the basis for it is as good as ever, and what we now propose doing is to restore that garden."

Mercer burst out laughing.

"But that's just what I mean, young man!" cried Ezra Mantor. "I'm not joking." He turned to Julia again. "You've got a good, clear voice. Can you write?"

Julia said that she could.

"Could you write a letter home and tell your friends in New England what you have seen out here, what has pleased you most, and what has impressed you most?"

"I think so," said Julia.

"What has?" asked Mantor, immediately.

Julia reflected. "The fine scenery along Puget Sound, the great dark green forests, and the lofty white peaks in the distance," she declared.

"Good!" said Mantor. "I see you have an eye for things. Now about how deep should cucumbers be planted?"

There was a great deal more talk, the result of which was that the next morning Julia made the

acquaintance of Mrs. Mantor, a brisk little old woman who could only whisper. Julia accompanied her over the bluffs to the "queer, long shanty," where she was trying to keep house with the help of two Indian women and the Chinaman.

The shanty house was fully eighty feet long. The Mantors lived at one end of it; the other end became Julia's domain. The kitchen was in the middle. The two squaws came every morning from their lodges near the river, and the Chinaman occupied a little hut of his own near by.

Now the place is within the limits of the fast-expanding city of Seattle; then it was two miles out in the woods—merely a clearing of five or six acres amidst the great cedar and Douglas firs. The ground had lately been burned over; enormous blackened logs lay crisscross everywhere, and all about were stumps higher than your head. Never before had Julia seen such logs, stumps and trees; for weeks thereafter she found in them matter for daily wonder.

It was here that Uncle Ezra Mantor was planning to restore the Garden of Eden! He had not ten minutes a day for it himself; the lumber business at the water-front took all his time; but at night he would come rushing home with his pockets full of garden seeds, and dig among those stumps as long as he could see. He had a hundred schemes in mind. His plans for the future embraced the whole of Washington Territory. He wanted to tell the entire country about it; and to that end he planned that Julia should write letters home and get them printed in the country newspapers throughout the East.

Nowadays such zealous men in a new country are called promoters, "boomers" or "boosters"—terms not then invented. "Uncle Ezra" did not know that he was a "booster"; he was simply in earnest in his desire to make Washington Territory prosper. He thought that he had found the best place in the world,

and he wanted to swing his hat and shout, "Come on, boys!" to everybody in the East.

It was all new business for Julia. Every day she had to go to market—such as it was—over in the town. There was a deep, heavily timbered ravine to cross. Once she saw a panther stealing after her there, attracted perhaps by the salmon in her basket; large bears, too, often appeared in the clearing.

Yet she rather liked the novelty of it all. There was something inspiring in Mantor's enthusiasm. She grew interested in the "new Garden of Eden," and kept the Chinaman and the Indian women at work clearing and burning off the brush and logs. At first it was nearly impossible to get seeds in Seattle, or even hoes. Mantor had to send to Portland for many things.

In the last days of May, however, they were able to plant peas, corn, cucumbers, potatoes, beets, turnips, carrots, radishes, squashes, and fully an acre of cabbages. And within a month all doubt whether a garden could be cultivated there was dispelled. In fact, the vegetables flourished almost too well; the plants grew fast and rank.

By August they had all the fresh young vegetables they wanted for their table, and the "Garden of Eden" began to be the talk of the new town. Uncle Ezra built a stall near his office at the wharf, to display the vegetables. He set up a board over it, fifteen feet long, on which he painted the words:

"Grown right here in Seattle!"

As the "Garden of Eden" ripened, a multitude of ground-squirrels entered it from all sides. Hundreds of these little creatures had to be destroyed by the use of strychnin. Deer and bears, too, came in, and Julia herself was obliged to watch at night, and at last to supervise the building of a high log fence

about the entire clearing. An enormous flock of crows, from the riverside, where the Indians had recently been curing salmon, also descended on the garden, and had to be dealt with as the squirrels had been.

Nor were these the worst of her troubles. The two squaws carried a few heads of cabbage home to their lodges; and the Indians liked them so well that soon they began to steal cabbages wholesale from the garden. So sly were the young redskins in creeping over the fence that it was next to impossible to catch them. They took two thousand cabbage heads—fully half the crop—in one week.

Uncle Ezra was in a towering passion, and Julia was at a loss what to do. She hit on a ruse, however, that so amused her employer that he laughed over it for months afterward.

Knowing very well that the two squaws carried word of everything that was done at the garden to their families over at the river, Julia put some harmless wheat flour in a tin box like that in which she kept the deadly white strychnin powder, and going through the cabbages, sprinkled every head with it. The Indian women, who had seen the effect of that white powder on the squirrels and crows, were in a great hurry to go home that night; and—no more cabbages were stolen!

Every two days thereafter Julia was wont to go out with the box, and in full view of the squaws, to dust more flour over the entire crop of vegetables.

She was thus engaged one afternoon when, so suddenly as to startle her, a man, whom she had not seen, climbed the fence, laughed and spoke:

"Well, well, well! At last I've found you!"

Turning, she saw Ben Dunham.

CHAPTER VI

YES, it was Ben Dunham.

"You look amazed!" he exclaimed, laughing. "But you wouldn't stay in San Francisco. So I had to follow on and find you. Such a time as I've had finding you, too! I went first to Mercer, over at the 'university.' He referred me to a certain 'Uncle Ezra Mantor.' I hunted the old fellow up, introduced myself, and asked where I could find you. Uncle Ezra looked me over carefully, and said, 'Young man, you will find her where she belongs, in the Garden of Eden.' 'Where's that?' I asked. 'Read your Bible,' he said. 'You will find it there.' That was all I could get out of him. It is my private opinion that the old fellow didn't particularly want me to find you. I started out on the street, and asked the first man I met if he could direct me to the Garden of Eden. 'Follow your nose right up over the bluffs,' he said. 'Keep going in that direction, and ask anybody you meet.' I did; and they all knew."

"I have not forgotten the good turn you did us at San Francisco," Julia said. "I want to thank you for it. I had no chance to do so before we sailed."

"Oh, that was all in the way of business. I wanted to see you again in San Francisco. That first interview of ours was cut short, you know."

"You certainly did take leave rather suddenly that morning, when you slid down the line. But I saw there was reason for it."

"Yes, Captain Winsor—his fist, and what a fist!" Dunham exclaimed. "But all such little incidents come at times in a reporter's life. We are used to it. Which reminds me to tell you that I think of starting a daily paper of my own here in Seattle."

"But what made you leave your San Francisco paper?"

"I couldn't stand its politics. What I want is a paper of my own. Then I can say what I think is right and proper. Nobody shall stop me, either! I've got a bone to pick with three or four big rascals on this coast. In California they would not let me print the truth. So I have come up here. I've got a job as correspondent for the Olympia *Columbian* and the Portland *Oregonian*. But what I want is to start a daily paper of my own in Seattle. There's a lot of crooked fellows up here, too. When I get started, they will hear something. I'll make the splinters fly, see if I don't!"

"I'm afraid you will soon get into trouble, and have to move on again."

"Not if I have a paper of my own. I shall stand my ground and fight it out! I'm up here to stay, and I hope you will let me call and see you now and then."

"Why, certainly, I shall be glad enough to see you—occasionally," Julia replied. "I shall always feel grateful for what you did in our behalf at San Francisco."

After Dunham had gone, she resumed her sprinkling thoughtfully. "He is a good, straightforward fellow," she said to herself. "He is bright enough and smart enough to succeed out here. But he lacks a balance-wheel. He will always be having smash-ups and getting into trouble—unless some one keeps him out of it. I wonder if any one could?"

The garden had a thousand cares for her. Moreover, Uncle Ezra was importuning her night and morning to write more of those homely letters about Washington Territory; "Letters from the Mercer Maidens in their New Homes," he called them. He had Julia persuade her friends, Henrietta and Elizabeth, to write similar letters and give him copies of them.

Owing to her defective education, writing was hard work for Julia at first, for she had to toil over each letter with dictionary and grammar. To Doctor Hale, in Boston, she sent one of her best letters, describing the new country to which she and Henrietta had come, and assuring him of their prosperity. Doctor Hale replied cordially, and had parts of her letter printed in the Boston newspapers.

That suited Uncle Ezra. He had, indeed, a list of a hundred or more newspapers throughout the New England and the Middle States, to which he mailed copies of the Mercer Maidens' letters, in order that the people in the East might learn of the wonderful advantages of the Northwest. All these letters he dated from "The New Garden of Eden on Puget Sound."

Nearly every day he had some new project that he confided to Julia. Already he and his wife had planned to enlarge the garden; for they wanted to raise hops and all kinds of fruit. Uncle Ezra talked much, too, of the wild vegetable products of Washington, the *wapato,* or Indian potato, the *cama,* the *kalse,* and the wild berries. He believed that with care and the fertile soil all these might be so improved by cultivation as to furnish something new and excellent in the way of food products.

He owned a tug, the *Tiger,* and several schooners, for towing and transporting his lumber. In one of the schooners, the *Rose Adelaide,*—named after his wife, whom he generally addressed by both names,—he planned to make collecting trips by water, up and down the sound. At the mouths of the creeks and rivers there were thickets of wild crab-apple trees, some of which he meant to transplant and graft with scions from the East. He also wished to get apple-seeds from an old tree down the sound, at Steilacoom, planted in the days when the Hudson Bay Company controlled the territory.

He had, moreover, a longer voyage in view—a trip out through the Strait of Juan de Fuca and down the coast to Gray's Harbor and Shoalwater Bay, which he wanted to undertake in order to learn about the oysters and other shell-fish of Washington Territory. And he also proposed still another voyage, into the mouth of the Columbia, and up the Willamette River, to Salem, Oregon, for a load of young apple, cherry, pear, plum and quince-trees from the new Luelling nurseries, the first stock for which had been brought in two wagons overland from Iowa. And so contagious was the enthusiasm of the Mantors that Julia soon found herself keenly interested in their plans.

The two squaws who worked at the garden used to pilfer coffee from the kitchen, after the Chinaman had roasted and ground it; they grew so bold that sometimes they carried off nearly all that he had prepared for the week.

At best, that poor, lone Celestial—his name was Lin-Lung—led a sad life there. He dared not go more than fifty yards from the house, or show himself beyond the garden. Whenever the Indians caught sight of him outside the fence, they gave chase, with terrifying whoops. Had they caught him, they would very likely have cut off his "pigtail." When Julia was not in sight, they even came into the garden after him. Much of the time he hid in the house, near Mrs. Mantor.

But Lin-Lung had grown expert in escaping his enemies. In the high log fence round the garden there was a hollow tree trunk about fifty feet long and four feet or more in diameter. It was one of the bottom logs of the fence, and lay on the ground in such a position that one end of it was mainly inside the fence and the other end mainly outside. The persecuted Chinaman, who was a small man, had found that although there was one place in the log

that was a tight fit for him, he could wriggle through it. So when the Indians frightened him outside the garden, he would scurry for this log, crawl through, and run for the kitchen; but if the enemy surprised him in the garden, he crawled out through the log the other way, and hid in the woods.

Now Lin-Lung had seen what happened to the crows and the squirrels when Uncle Ezra and Julia had used a certain white powder; he had seen Julia sprinkle flour on the cabbages. To save his coffee, he thought he would do a little stroke of business on his own account. Roasting and grinding half a pound or more of coffee, he poured black pepper into it with a liberal hand, and set it in a handy and convenient place for the squaws to pilfer.

They pilfered as usual, and after going home that afternoon, made coffee for themselves and their friends. Almost immediately after drinking it, they were all rushing about to cool their mouths. Remembering the crows, they concluded that they were poisoned! The squaws had seen the Chinaman grinding the coffee; they cried out against him; and a brother of one of them, named Cus'ahban, and called by the whites "Sour Face," started out, knife in hand, to wreak vengeance.

This Cus'ahban was supposed to be a nephew of the famous Chief Leschi, whom Isaac Stevens, the territorial governor, had caused to be hanged after the Indian war of 1855. Cus'ahban, who had himself narrowly escaped the gallows, was known to cherish ugly feelings against the whites.

Julia had gone to market that afternoon. Except for the Chinaman, who was picking peas in the garden, Mrs. Mantor was alone. Suddenly she heard Lin-Lung's quavering yells. Running to the door, she beheld Sour Face in hot pursuit of Lin-Lung. But the Chinaman reached his log of refuge and dived into it. With his knife beween his teeth, Sour Face

crawled in after him, but being a large man, he could not get through. He backed out, and started to climb the fence. As he went over the fence, Lin-Lung returned through the log, and peeping out, screamed for help.

They repeated this performance several times, but Sour Face could never climb the fence quick enough to catch the Chinaman. Finally, convinced that Lin-Lung was too nimble for him, Sour Face tried again to crawl through the log.

At this juncture Mrs. Mantor took a hand in the game. The instant she saw the Indian's moccasined feet disappear in the log, she dashed out with a hoe. The terrified Lin-Lung was now on the top log of the fence, looking fearfully down on both sides, for he could hear Sour Face in the log trying to squeeze through the narrow place.

"Hit his legs if he backs out!" whispered Mrs. Mantor. She thrust the hoe into the Chinaman's hands, and then, scaling the fence herself, began jamming bits of wood and stones and anything else she could lay hands on into the hole at the other end.

Suddenly aware that he had a new enemy to deal with, Sour Face roared defiance, and started to back out; but the now emboldened Lin-Lung dealt him such a hard cut on the calves of his legs with the blade of the hoe that he pulled in his feet in a great hurry.

"Give it to him! Hit him hard!" Mrs. Mantor urged the Chinaman. "Whack his feet if he sticks them out!" Meanwhile she was running to and fro, bringing stones from a heap near by. On his side of the fence, Lin-Lung followed her example, and between them they soon had the log stoppered at both ends. To make sure of their prisoner, they kept at it for half an hour, in which time they pushed and drove into the log nearly a cart-load of stones.

Sour Face had now ceased his howls; they heard him plying his knife vigorously in an attempt to dig

his way through the outer shell of the log, and mounted guard over the spot with the hoe. But the dry fir wood proved too much for the Indian's knife; he gave up at last, and relapsed into sullen quiet—and that was the state of things at the garden when Julia returned from her marketing.

Although letting the Indian out was not to be thought of, the idea that he might suffocate there was so shocking that Julia had the Chinaman get one of Uncle Ezra's augers from the shanty and bore holes through the outer shell of the log. In fact, they were thus employed when the old lumber merchant came home from his office at sunset.

"Strange that red and yellow can't get along any better together!" the old man exclaimed, when they told him what had been going on.

Shouting into the auger-holes, he finally got a sulky response. Thus far they had not known who their captive was, and at first Uncle Ezra had been inclined to let him out; but when he found that it was Sour Face, he set off for the sheriff. "No danger of his smothering!" Uncle Ezra exclaimed. "He's a bad Indian. We will run no risks with him."

He had gone but a few steps, however, when he met Mercer and Ben Dunham, and told them hastily where he was going.

"Go no farther!" Dunham exclaimed. "We will tackle him! We can master him—and here's some news for my paper!"

All three hastened to the garden, where the two younger men greeted Julia in high glee and excitement.

"Much obliged to you for this!" Ben Dunham exclaimed. "Just what I need to round out my first week's work here! I have just finished my *exposé* of the gamblers of Seattle. Gave it to 'em hot, yet still I was afraid it would fall a little flat. But if I can only land old Sour Face in jail, it will be a big

thing for me! My very first week here!" In high spirits, he rushed off with Uncle Ezra to get a rope from the shanty.

Julia could not help laughing; but Mercer whispered to her ironically that it would probably be a great week for him in more ways than one. "I shouldn't like to be in his shoes after what he's written about the gambling fraternity in this town is published. There are men here who hold human life cheap."

"Have you warned him?" Julia asked, in low tones.

"Warn Ben Dun!" exclaimed Mercer, smiling. "Warn the north wind!"

"But please do so!" Julia said, earnestly. "Promise me that you will!"

"I've warned him, and I'll warn again," Mercer replied. "He's a splendid fellow. His heart's in just the right spot. But rash—rash is no word for it!"

No more was said, for now Uncle Ezra and Ben Dunham, coming back with a rope, began to take away the stones with which Mrs. Mantor and the Chinaman had blocked up the log. So many had been pushed and driven in, however, that after several minutes' work they found the easiest way to get the Indian out would be to cut through the outer shell of the log.

Seizing the ax, Ben Dunham made the chips fly. The badly jarred redskin inside roared for mercy. Ben Dunham went on plying the ax, however, until he had split an opening four or five feet long. Sour Face was bidden to hand out his knife, and then to stand up and cross his wrists behind him, to be tied—all of which he did quietly, for he had had quite enough of imprisonment in the log. While the ax-strokes were falling, he had had little doubt that he was going to be made into mince-meat for the pies

for which Seattle was already beginning to be famous.

The two young men volunteered to take the captive to the lockup. Ben Dunham, indeed, greatly craved the distinction of delivering the Indian into legal custody. Accordingly, he and Mercer said good night, and set off, with Sour Face between them, securely tied.

Although the Indian was duly committed to jail for assault, the judge of the municipal court, after three days' confinement, saw fit to release him, on the ground that he and the other Indians had believed that the Chinaman had tried to poison them.

This was not the end of the adventure. One evening, about five days later, Mercer made his appearance at the garden. He looked worried. "Has our friend, Ben Dun, been here to-day?" he asked Julia.

"No," she replied, looking up with frightened eyes. "Has anything happened?"

CHAPTER VII

"IT is just as I feared," said Mercer, in a low voice. He drew a copy of the *Columbian* from his pocket. "Look at this—'A Horde of Thugs.' That is Ben Dunham's attack on the gamblers of the town, and he has put his name to it. That's what he calls them—'thugs'; and he names them, too, and gives the addresses of their gambling-dens."

"Is it the truth about them?" Julia asked.

"Oh, I dare say. Here is Jim Oakley's name. Dunham says he is none other than that notorious John Oakhurst, whom they lynched, or tried to, in California. People there thought he was dead. But he got away, Dunham says, and came up here, under the name of James Oakley. Here's his whole record exposed. When I read that, I expected Oakley would shoot him at sight! But instead, he's sent Dunham a challenge to fight."

"What, fight a duel? I thought there was a law against it."

"I believe there is," replied Mercer.

"Mr. Dunham will not fight, then."

"But he has accepted the challenge, and named rifles as weapons. They are going to fight on the beach, over back of Alki Point, at five to-morrow morning."

"Goodness, he will be killed!" cried Julia.

"I'm afraid so."

"Can you not stop it somehow?"

"I did my best to keep him out of it; I tried to persuade him not to accept the challenge. I told him he would be killed. But he said that no one up here would pay any attention to what he wrote if he

backed down. He means to start a newspaper, you know. 'If people here know I will back up my words, they will read my paper,' he declared. 'You can do nothing in a new town like this unless people see that you have backbone.'"

"Oh, but we must stop him somehow!"

"Yes, but how? No use to ask Ben Dun to back down. He won't. He can't. It isn't in him! And whatever we do must be done to-night. To-morrow will be too late."

"Let's tell Mr. Mantor," Julia suggested.

"Yes, Uncle Ezra may think of something. He's a long-headed old fellow."

They set off, and met the old lumberman on his way home to the "garden."

"Well, I suspected as much when I read the *Columbian* this morning," he said. "So that young Boanerges is going to fight a duel? Well, girl, what do you care if he does?" Uncle Ezra cast a keen look at Julia.

"Mr. Dunham was a good friend of ours when we were in difficulties last spring," Julia replied. "His life is in danger. Mr. Mercer and I want to save him."

"Yes, his life's in danger fast enough, if he's going to fight that gambling, card-turning scamp, Oakley," Uncle Ezra said. "Oakley's a dead shot, I hear. Oh, those card-sharps mean to stop his noise, no doubt about that. Away off over there behind Alki, with all those marshes to cross before light in the morning? They mean to make sure of him!"

"But can nothing be done to stop it?" Julia exclaimed.

Uncle Ezra regarded her soberly.

"Asa, where's young Boanerges staying?" he said to Mercer.

"With me," Mercer replied. "Over near the university. In the daytime he is mostly out and abroad,

'mousing,' as he calls it, for news. But it would be a waste of breath to urge him to back down. He means to fight."

"No need to tell me that," said Uncle Ezra, with a chuckle. "I took his measure when he was chopping out that redskin that Rose Adelaide had coopered up. I only asked where he was—in case we wanted him."

"There isn't much time to lose," Mercer said, uneasily.

"That's so. By the way, I hear they've turned Sour Face loose again. He's a bad Indian. Julia, you'd better go home and take in our Chinaman and put him where Sour Face won't get him. Tell Rose Adelaide that business has called me back to town,—needn't tell her what,—and that I may be late home, but tell her she needn't worry."

He set off with Mercer, while Julia went back to the garden much disturbed. But she saw nothing of Sour Face, for the very good reason that the gambler Oakley had got hold of him and given him a job even more to his liking than hunting Lin-Lung. That, however, did not come out until the following afternoon, when old Seattle, or Sealth,—the Indian chief for whom Seattle was named,—sought out Uncle Ezra and told him that Oakley had offered Sour Face a gallon of whiskey and a new gun to waylay Dunham in the woods on his way to Alki beach.

Seattle liked Uncle Ezra, who often gave the old Indian a silver dollar when he came to his office. Seattle was believed to be nearly or quite a hundred years old; but he contrived to hobble into town from his lodge about once a week to call on Uncle Ezra and get that dollar. He told his benefactor many things that were going on among the Indians.

This plot on the part of Ben Dunham's enemies, however, came to light too late. The duel had to be prevented by other means.

"Tell you what we'll do, Asa," Uncle Ezra said.

"We'll go to Judge Thatcher and get a warrant for our warlike young friend on complaint of attempted dueling. Then we will call on Sheriff Dagley and have him serve it. We'll clap Dunham under lock and key and keep him there overnight—in a safe place."

Mercer demurred at first. "I don't like to treat a friend like that. Dunham will be in a terrible state of mind over it."

"Oh, I dare say he will." Uncle Ezra laughed. "He won't be the first young fellow who doesn't know what's good for him."

"But I don't like to go after him with a warrant in that way!"

"We won't go ourselves. We'll send the sheriff with a couple of men, to take him quietly and shut him up overnight. To-morrow, when his case comes up in court, no one need appear against him. I'll give Judge Thatcher a hint how the land lies. It will do young Boanerges no harm in the end; it may do him good. He needs a little 'soopling.'"

Mercer finally consented; they secured a warrant, and roused the sheriff to serve it.

Meanwhile Ben Dunham was at Mercer's lodgings, writing a few letters, which he felt might be his last. He was having a mournful evening. Now that the first heat of the affair had passed, Ben Dunham felt apprehensive and miserable. Mercer had told him that the gambler was a dead shot; presentiments of death thronged his mind.

"This is probably the end of me," he said to himself, bitterly. "I've been a hasty, headlong fool all my life. By this time to-morrow I shall probably be dead and buried—in the potter's field. I wonder if that Maine girl will care. I wonder if anybody will care. Why should they?"

Finishing his letters, he lay down, but he was too wretched to sleep.

There came a knock at the door.

"Come in!" he said.

The door opened, and three men, one of whom was Sheriff Dagley, entered.

"Is your name Dunham?" the sheriff asked.

"It is. What's wanted?"

"I'm the sheriff of King County. I have a warrant for your arrest." The sheriff displayed the legal document.

"Warrant? For me? On what charge? I will not go a step till I know the charge!"

"The warrant rests on a complaint of your known intention to fight a duel to-morrow." The sheriff read the warrant in part.

"Who is the complainant?"

"That you may learn in court," replied the sheriff. "Will you come along quietly, or shall I put the twisters on?"

The young man decided not to resist. Perhaps he even felt a sense of relief.

Uncle Ezra was late in getting home, but he found Julia still up, awaiting him.

"Don't you burn any more midnight oil for young Boanerges," he said to her. "Go to bed in peace, girl. He is the safest young fellow in Seattle. He's got two of the town's best locks between him and Alki beach."

Since no complainant appeared against Dunham the next morning, the judge remanded him, and although Ben sent for a lawyer, he was unable to secure his release that day. Meanwhile the story that old Seattle had told Uncle Ezra of the plot to murder the would-be reformer went the rounds of the town, and raised a commotion.

Gambling was one thing, but hiring Indians to waylay and murder was another! At four o'clock that afternoon the citizens held an indignation meeting in what is now Pioneer Square. It was the

unanimous opinion, vociferously expressed, that the morals of the new city needed prompt attention. A "good order" committee of twenty of the younger men was named "to act for the public good." The committeemen did not stop long to deliberate. Before five o'clock they gave Oakley and six others of his kind notice to leave town within three hours. They departed that night, and Seattle knew them no more.

On the following day Ben Dunham was discharged from custody. Judge Thatcher merely warned him that such early gunning excursions at Alki were not permitted, and that if he were going to become a citizen of Seattle, he must abide by the laws.

Although he was chagrined at having got into jail, Dunham left it feeling just as aggressive as ever. On hearing what Sour Face had been hired to do, he could not help but be thankful for his arrest, but nevertheless he wanted to know who had complained of him. Mercer laughed and would tell him nothing; so the next evening Ben Dunham looked in at Uncle Ezra's office, in the hope of learning something there.

The old lumber king, who was about to start on his homeward walk over the bluffs to the "Garden of Eden," invited Ben Dunham to go with him. Dunham accepted the invitation, although he felt a little ashamed to have Julia learn that he had been in jail. On the way he talked of what he meant to do next.

"There are those men who fooled and swindled Mercer!" he exclaimed. "They got the *Continental* away from Mercer for less than half its value by a mean legal trick. Now, I hear, they are going to run the *Continental* for freight and passengers up here to Seattle. I will expose them. People here shall know just how those fellows treated Mercer."

"Hum-m-m!" Uncle Ezra said.

"Then there's that disunion clique down at Olympia; the worst enemies this territory has. They're giving us a bad name in the East. I will show them up. I'll let the nation know that they don't represent us."

"I suppose not," assented Uncle Ezra.

"And there are all these liquor-sellers here; the way they're foisting the worst kind of fire-water on the Indians is a shame. I'm going after all those fellows hot and heavy. I shall tackle the whole gang of them to-morrow."

Uncle Ezra was silent.

"I hope you agree with me," Dunham said.

"Well, I was thinking that perhaps, being a newcomer here, you were biting off more than you could chew, and that you would be likely to keep your friends busy rescuing you."

Ben did not altogether relish this last remark.

"Just what do you mean by that, Mr. Mantor?" he demanded.

Uncle Ezra laughed. "Look here, son," he said, "your feelings and sentiments are fine. Your principles, too, are mighty good—but they fly to your head! You're ready to tackle everybody and everything all at once. You're a regular little David with his sling. But even David, you know, couldn't fight the whole army of the Philistines all at once. He had to get Goliath out by himself, and get some little smooth stones ready beforehand."

Ben Dunham looked dissatisfied, but could not help laughing.

"You see, my son, you've done a good stroke of business, for your first week here. You've driven out the gamblers, put Sour Face in jail, started out to fight a duel, and been in jail yourself. Hadn't you better slow up a little bit and not tackle all creation at once?"

"Waiting isn't my way!" Ben Dunham muttered,

impatiently. "I want to do something. I want to make a name for myself."

"So I see! So I see! I don't blame you for that. It's just the way every young fellow ought to feel. But if you want to make a name for yourself out here, one that will last and bring honor to you for years to come, pitch in and help develop the natural resources of this great new country, the mines, the lumber, but most of all, the agriculture. Work for the solid prosperity of our future great State of Washington. Don't waste your time digging up old political troubles. Let them rest. It isn't much use, either, for you to wrestle all alone with that steamship company. As for the liquor traffic up here, it is so big an evil that we shall all have to work together if it ever is suppressed. I like your principles, my boy. I agree with you. But we have to use judgment. There's no use to stir up hornets till you are ready to burn the nest."

"But I hate to sit still and see things go wrong! I want to do something."

"And that's all right, too. All the same, you are seeing things a little too lurid just now. Go out in the garden, where that young lady is, and look at the things growing there. You've been looking at what's red too much lately. Look at the green garden a while. That's a good girl out there. She has lots of common sense. Go and see what she says about this."

Uncle Ezra went indoors, to see how Rose Adelaide had fared during the long day.

CHAPTER VIII

THE strawberry plants that they set in the "Garden of Eden" that summer behaved strangely. As if bewildered by the Puget Sound climate, they blossomed and blossomed for four or five weeks, and did not show ripe berries until late in September.

Julia was gathering a basketful for supper, and while she worked, she was thinking that perhaps they might get a new late-bearing variety, and so have strawberries for five months of the year, when she saw Ben Dunham approaching. She had suspected that it was Uncle Ezra and Mercer who had had him locked up. As he drew near, she noticed that, contrary to his custom, he did not shout his greetings the moment he caught sight of her.

"I've been in jail," he said, soberly. "Was it you who put me in?"

"No," replied Julia.

"Who did?"

"Some of your friends, I think; I haven't asked. I am sure it was done for your good."

"You approved of it, then?"

"I might have." Julia put a handful of strawberries in her basket.

"Oh, I can see you think I'm a fool!"

"No, I think you're a very promising young man, but too impetuous," Julia replied.

"It is impetuous people who get things done in this world."

"Yes, sometimes—if they live."

"Oh, I know what you mean!" Ben Dunham cried. "You think I ought to be grateful to Mercer, or Uncle Ezra Mantor, or whoever it was that had me arrested."

"I think no doubt it saved your life. Your friends believe your life is of value. Aren't these wonderful strawberries? Did you ever see things grow as they do here?"

Ben Dunham looked round on the fresh green luxuriance of the garden. "Yes," he said, laughing, "your 'Uncle Ezra' wanted me to look at the green things growing a while! He says I have been looking at 'red' too much lately. He thinks that the way for me to make a name for myself up here is to pitch in strong and help develop the natural resources of this new country—and let politics alone."

"I think so, too," Julia said.

Ben Dunham regarded her thoughtfully. "I don't mind confessing to you that I am ambitious," he said. "I want to lead public opinion. I want to rise to the first place out here. That's why I planned to start a paper of my own. That's why I tackled the gamblers. That's why I determined to fight that card sharp. I want to be first man in this new town."

"Yes, I can see that," Julia replied.

"It isn't all my selfishness," Ben Dunham continued. "I wish to win the esteem of my friends—of you most of all."

"You are growing impetuous again," Julia said, lightly. "I see that Mrs. Mantor is at the door, looking for our strawberries."

At table Uncle Ezra, as usual, talked of the garden, and of his new plans for procuring and propagating fruit. He drew glowing pictures of the future growth and prosperity of Seattle and of Washington, and Mrs. Mantor whispered an eager word now and then.

"Why, young man," he exclaimed to Dunham, "if you did but know it, this is the chance of a lifetime! I want just such an energetic young fellow as you to take hold with me and help push things. I need you. I'll give you a good salary. Take hold—and put

your earnings into land right round this town. You will be a rich man in ten years."

Ben Dunham, however, did not care especially for riches. His mind was set on that daily paper. He said so.

"Well," replied Uncle Ezra, doubtfully, "that takes money. Look at the number of new papers that have started up already in this territory. I know of fourteen. Most of them failed. Hardly one of them has ever paid a cent.

"But I know how you feel about this," the old lumberman continued. "I had the same ambition myself once. It was back East, when I was a young man. I bought a press and type, and started my paper. The *Star,* I called it. It twinkled nearly eighteen months. It was a small place. I had about three hundred and eighty subscribers. I was reporter, editor, publisher, and everything else on the *Star.* I worked like a slave, and kept the paper alive by doing job printing at night.

"But the end came. The *Star* set one night in gloom and darkness, and didn't rise the following evening. In fact, it never rose again; but it kept me busy, working at lumbering for two years afterward, paying up my debts.

"Then I started for the West, and came out here, but not to publish a newspaper! I had had my lesson. When I write anything now that I want people to read, I put it in somebody else's newspaper. I never see a young man start a paper without pitying him."

But Ben Dunham was far from being convinced or deterred by talk of that sort.

"Mr. Mantor," he exclaimed, "I will start a paper here and publish all you want to write about the country!"

"That's fair enough on your part," Uncle Ezra replied. "But we want to publish the facts about the country in the Eastern papers. What's the use of

burying them in a little paper out here, with only a few hundred subscribers who all live out this way? Those are not the readers we want to interest; they are interested already. It is the great East, the men with money to invest, and the people who will migrate here, those are the people that we want to reach. That's why Julia and I are putting the valuable facts about this new territory into letters, and are having them published in a hundred newspapers throughout the Eastern states. And that's what I want you to help us do."

Uncle Ezra's scheme struck Ben Dunham as shrewd; but he still clung tenaciously to his idea of a paper of his own.

It disheartened him to find that Mercer fully agreed with Uncle Ezra's views. "The old man's right," Mercer said. "Besides, Dunham, the truth is that you hit out too hard to make a successful editor. You make violent enemies."

On account of his lack of capital, Ben Dunham at last went again to Ezra Mantor.

"Eventually I am going to have a paper of my own here in Seattle," he said, "but I will take what you have to offer me for two years, and see what I can do. It isn't the salary. Give me what you think I'm worth. I want to be doing something that counts."

"That's right! That's right!" Uncle Ezra said. "But I'll keep you busy. Don't you worry a mite about that, young man!"

The first thing he set him to do was to make a trip to Salem, Oregon, to engage young fruit-trees from the Luelling nurseries there, for setting out the following spring. A little later, when he had returned, Mantor despatched him on a still longer journey to the Eastern states. There was then no transcontinental railway; the Union Pacific line was not completed till 1869. Dunham went by way of the Isth-

mus of Panama. To obtain scions of the best Eastern apples, and seedlings of all kinds, was the object of this trip. All were to be carefully packed, boxed, and kept moist during the long journey back to the Northwest.

Ben Dunham threw himself into this work with characteristic ardor. But although he visited nurserymen, he also visited editors. At the newspaper offices at which he called he left articles on the new Northwest; and later, when these had been printed, he clipped them out and mailed them home to Seattle.

Seeing how well his information concerning the new territory was received by Eastern editors and readers, he prepared an illustrated lecture on the Puget Sound country, and delivered it in a score of cities and towns.

When Ben Dunham's letter describing this amateur lecture reached the Garden of Eden, Uncle Ezra was greatly pleased.

"Julia," he exclaimed, "you did a good stroke of business when you drew that young fellow up here after you!"

Julia hastily disclaimed any responsibility for Ben Dunham's arrival in Seattle.

"Yes, I know, I know!" Uncle Ezra replied. "But I've noticed that sometimes when a young lady doesn't seem to be trying at all, she may, like as not, be pulling her very hardest. Isn't that so, Rose Adelaide?" And Mrs. Mantor joined in his laugh.

Other letters concerning the lectures continued to come. Evidently Ben Dunham liked public speaking, and was waxing eloquent—so much so that Uncle Ezra's caution woke. "I hope young Boanerges won't overdo it. I hope he won't get too zealous and overstate the facts. I want them told just the plain truth about this country. The truth's enough."

Mantor kept Julia almost as busy as he did Dunham. Under such titles as "Strawberries in Oc-

tober," "Strawberries All Summer Long," and so forth, the berries that ripened in the autumn supplied a topic for several letters to newspapers in the East. Henrietta, Elizabeth, Mercer and other young friends were invited to a strawberry feast; and then Uncle Ezra would contrive to set them writing letters about it to their people back East. It was not Mantor's fault if a million people in the Eastern states did not hear about those berries.

Ben Dunham did not return to Seattle till March. Then he came so laden with seeds, plants, bulbs, rose-bushes, scions and young trees that it was evident that if they and those that were coming from Salem were to be planted, the Garden of Eden would have to be greatly enlarged that spring. Twenty acres, at least, were needed, and all the land thereabouts was covered by a typical Puget Sound growth of cedar and Douglas fir, huge trees from three to seven and even eight in diameter, and as much as two hundred feet tall.

Having procured help, Ben Dunham set to work to clear the land. But to fell and burn such giant trees was a formidable task. Even to fell one of the larger firs took two woodchoppers half a day. Four or five unusually large ones stood fifty or sixty yards to the eastward of the long, shanty-like house—so near, in fact, as to shade it till past ten o'clock of a forenoon.

Dunham was usually at the garden by sunrise, urging on the work, and even plying an ax himself. But with all his industry, he could not clear the land fast enough to suit him. He questioned many lumbermen and pioneers about the best and quickest ways to fell the trees and rid the ground of the trunks. He talked, among others, with a man named Meeker, who had come to Puget Sound in 1853, and who later wrote an entertaining history of his early experiences in the country. Meeker told him of a way

to burn down the trees by boring into the trunks with an auger.

"Use a two-inch auger," Meeker said. "Bore two holes, one above the other, six inches apart and four or five feet above the ground. But bore at such an angle that the holes will run into each other, about a foot inside the bark, in the wood of the tree.

"Burn some dry alder wood, and load the lower hole with the live coals and some pitch, or pitchy bark. You must manage to get a little draft in at the lower hole and out through the upper one; the idea is to start a fire burning in the heart-wood of the tree.

"Once you get the fire started in there, it will burn the trunk entirely away, inside the bark. Then down will come your tree with the first gust of wind—and no ax-work."

Ben Dunham got an auger and fell to work. He bored twenty trees the first day, and fired them with live coals and pitch, according to directions. Some of the great firs smoked a little; but perhaps because the weather was moist and foggy, most of the fires went out.

To give the method a fair trial, Ben Dunham fired the holes again and again, but the fire did not take well.

Then the weather cleared, with a wind from the east; two mornings later Julia smelled smoke coming from the large firs beyond the house on the east side of the garden. She went and took a look at them. Little puffs of thin, blue vapor issued now and then from several of the holes in the trunks. "Your trees are burning, after all," she said to Ben Dunham.

"No such good news, I'm afraid," he replied. "Nothing but ax-work seems to do any good here."

Julia, however, took another look at the trees. They were very tall, but it did not seem to her that even if they did fall they would reach the house; moreover, they all appeared to lean away—all but

one, and that was considerably farther off than the others.

They were burning log-piles that day and the next, and making so much smoke that the whiffs from the trees ceased to be noticeable. On the third night the wind was again from the east, and the following morning was gusty.

Potatoes, peas, and even garden beans, had already been planted. Julia was out in the garden early, to see what had come up; for Dunham, who had also come early, was busy fetching water to moisten the roots of the fruit-trees that had arrived and lay "heeled in." Enough ground for setting them was not yet cleared, and the recent dry, warm weather made him anxious about them.

From the shanty chimney a blithe smoke rose; Lin-Lung was getting breakfast. Uncle Ezra came out. Rose Adelaide had given him his breakfast, and he was setting off for his office in town. "Good morning, young Jehu!" he shouted to Ben Dunham, as he went away. "The men say you're a terrible driver!"

A moment later Lin-Lung appeared at the door to call Julia; and just then there came a gust of wind that swayed the great trees perceptibly. In the midst of it there resounded a loud, hollow crack—followed by a crash in the treetops beyond the garden.

Glancing in that direction, Julia saw an alarming spectacle. The large tree in the rear of those standing nearest the house fell part way, and lodged against one of the others; the nearer tree swayed an instant, and then gave way with an even louder crack, and both came thundering down together.

From where she stood Julia saw the Chinaman fly from the door with a shrill yell of terror, saw the trees topple slowly over, and saw with a thrill of horror that the nearer one would fall squarely on the roof of the house.

The very ground shook as it struck. Fence logs bounced high in the air; huge limbs broke like jack-straws. With a horrible crash the house roof was staved in. The whole structure seemed buried in green boughs.

For a moment she stood terror-stricken as she thought of Mrs. Mantor. Lin-Lung had got clear, and was still running. Dunham rushed toward the wrecked house.

The shanty roof had been crushed like an egg-shell; the log walls were twisted askew; the door and windows were shattered. Such a mass of green boughs obstructed the wreck that Ben and Julia could not reach the door. Ben Dunham had to get an ax to cut it away.

Uncle Ezra, who had heard the crash, came running back to the garden. When he saw the shattered house, the old man turned white. "My God, she's inside!" he moaned.

With a few more blows, Dunham cleared away the splintered door, and all three were pushing forward to look in, when they heard Mrs. Mantor speak!

"I'm here, Ezra! I'm here!"

"It's her ghost!" cried Uncle Ezra. "She hasn't spoken a loud word for fifteen years!"

"I'm here! I'm not hurt a bit!" the high-pitched voice continued; then they saw her face peeping out from under the bedstead.

"Speak again, Rose Adelaide! Speak again, if it's really you!" Uncle Ezra cried, in a voice shaken with emotion.

Mrs. Mantor was crawling out. "I saw it coming!" she declared. "I was at the window and I saw it start. I had just time to turn and dart under the bed, when down the roof came! And it's broken all my dishes!"

"But, Rose Adelaide, you're talking out loud! Do you know you're talking out loud?" said Uncle Ezra.

"Why, so I am!" she exclaimed, apparently as much surprised as any one else. "I thought I'd heard that voice before! *It's mine!*" She and Mantor stood with their hands on each other's shoulders and stared at one another in happy amazement.

With long breaths of inexpressible relief, Ben Dunham and Julia glanced at each other, then at Lin-Lung, who had stolen up behind them, with his "pig-tail" wound twice round his neck. But smoke was issuing from the kitchen, and all three of them made haste to put out the fire about the overturned stove.

To Uncle Ezra his wife's recovered voice seemed melody of the sweetest kind.

"Say that again! Say that again, Rose Adelaide!" the old man exclaimed at nearly every sentence she uttered.

CHAPTER IX

AT first the new "Garden of Eden" kept every one so busy that there was no time to make those voyages of discovery about Puget Sound that the old lumberman had planned with such enthusiasm.

He wanted to go to Whidby Island for grasses; into the mouth of the Snoqualmie River for "camas" and wild crab-apples; to Victoria, on Vancouver Island, for roses and some new seed-potatoes; to Bellingham Bay and the Skagit River for "rainbow trout," with which to restock Lake Washington; to Astoria, Portland and the Willamette valley, to learn what fruits and crops were growing best at these older settlements; and to Shoalwater Bay and Gray's Harbor for Pacific coast oysters and other shell-fish, with a view to transplanting "bluepoint" oysters and "little-neck" clams from Atlantic to Pacific waters.

As Pacific coast oysters were then thought to have a coppery taste, Uncle Ezra had resolved to send Dunham East with some cleverly devised tanks for colonies of oysters and clams, to be planted in Shoalwater Bay and other favorable breeding-beds.

For a time, however, the garden demanded undivided attention, it grew with such frolicsome luxuriance. Those seedling fruit-trees from Salem and from the New York nurseries sent up sprouts six feet tall the first summer. The New England roses and potatoes appeared to be running races with each other, to see which could sprawl first over the big black stumps and logs, and cover them with red, white, pink and yellow blossoms.

The sweet corn, too, came up in haste, and in order

to keep up with the other things, grew ten feet high. Down in the shade a swampful of artichokes and sunflowers had apparently started to justify the tradition of Jack's beanstalk, and climb into the skies.

Day by day Julia viewed it all with increasing wonder. Not only the two squaws, but four or five other helpers, were kept busy with sharp hoes, chopping down great fireweeds, milkweeds and tree sprouts that sprang up in one night. Left to itself, a milkweed grew fifteen feet tall there in one summer.

The fame of the garden was spreading; hundreds of people came to see it, not only Seattle people, but strangers visiting the Northwest. Many, too, came for seeds, bulbs, tubers, rose roots, seedling fruit-trees, and raspberry, blackberry and strawberry plants. On some days Mrs. Mantor—who no longer whispered except when she took cold—and Julia could do little more than entertain the callers and purchasers. What would seem large prices in the East were given for seeds and plants. In a single day Julia took in more than two hundred and sixty dollars.

Of this money Uncle Ezra refused to touch a cent. "Divide it between you!" he exclaimed. "You and young Jehu divide it—and you'd better put it into land. Don't forget land, and land won't forget you ten years hence."

But "young Jehu," as Uncle Ezra had always called Dunham ever since he knocked the house down, was now on a trip to what is at present Stevens County, to look at a marble quarry of which Uncle Ezra had heard.

"It is just as well to keep young Jehu on the move," Mantor said. "He tears round so here that I feel full as safe when he's a hundred miles off. But I like him. I can't help liking him—if he did knock the house down! For he did what all the doctors couldn't do; he gave Rose Adelaide back her voice."

Eventually, although not till the second year that

Julia was there, they made many of the projected trips. Of these, the one to Shoalwater Bay was especially noteworthy.

When that was made, Ben Dunham was on his second voyage to the East, where he had gone to get "seed-oysters"; but he had been away two months or more, and was expected home very soon.

They went in the schooner, the skipper of which was an old seafaring man named Lovejoy, who had come round the Horn in a Provincetown whaler, about 1850. He had navigated this schooner for Uncle Ezra for several years. They had the Chinaman with them, to cook, and three sailors, one of whom was a Kanaka from Honolulu, called "Joe-John." They sailed out through the strait and down the coast as far as Nehalem beach, on which quantities of mysterious wax had come ashore.

About this wax Mrs. Mantor was as curious as Uncle Ezra himself. It still remains a mystery. Many have believed that it was part of a cargo of beeswax washed ashore from a wrecked vessel—perhaps shipped to this coast from Europe, for use in altar tapers at the Roman Catholic missions among the Indians. Others have contended that it came from some marine animal, from whales, perhaps—something in the nature of spermaceti or ambergris. Whatever it was, there was a great deal of it, lying partly exposed, partly buried in the sands. The first settlers at Nehalem made candles of it. Julia found a piece as large as a peck measure, which she still preserves as a curiosity.

After three days at Nehalem, they spent a week in Shoalwater Bay, fishing and dredging for oysters. Then they passed a week at Gray's Harbor. There were only a few settlements along the coast, where the prosperous ports and towns of Aberdeen, Hoquiam and Moclips have since grown up; from Gray's Harbor northward to Cape Flattery the country was a

wilderness, visited only by Indians and an occasional hunter after sea-otter.

It was late summer. Thus far they had encountered none but gentle breezes and warm weather. On account of fires to the eastward, round Puget Sound, the sky had been smoky much of the time; but at last the smoke lifted and revealed magnificent views of the snow-clad Olympics, with their mighty forests sloping down to the shores.

Fine weather held till the day after they sailed for home from Gray's Harbor. Then came a change, ushered in by squalls, followed by rain and so heavy a sea that they were made miserable from seasickness.

They held on their course, however, in order to double Cape Flattery and get inside the strait by the following morning, if possible. All at once the barometer began to fall. Then the wind came out of the northwest; and by four o'clock that afternoon it was blowing a gale and raining heavily.

Captain Lovejoy was a cautious skipper. Realizing that he could not round the cape, he put about and ran before the wind, in the hope of gaining the shelter of a bay he remembered to have seen down the coast. The gale increased steadily. At times tremendous following seas broke aboard; both small boats were carried away.

They were now drawing in near the coast; just at dusk Skipper Lovejoy caught sight, through the driving rain and mists, of what appeared to be the hoped-for haven. He attempted to make the entrance. Amid an awful roar of breakers on each hand, the little craft was swept through the entrance to the cove at racing speed, but in attempting to come to, was blown on a shoal. Across this shoal the great waves drove them, till the pounding vessel went hard and fast ashore on a gravel bank near the mouth of a small river.

There they passed the night, wet and in much dis-

comfort Even in that imminent peril, Uncle Ezra found time to worry lest Rose Adelaide should lose her voice again.

Where the schooner lay they were in no immediate danger of drowning. At daylight they saw a squaw coming along the beach with a net for fishing. They shouted and made signs for her to come to them, but she turned and ran away. Later, while the castaways were trying to kindle a fire in the stove of the flooded galley, they saw four Indians on the other side of the river, looking toward the schooner; but they, too, seemed unwilling to approach, and soon disappeared.

During that day the storm abated; but at best the situation was unpleasant, if not perilous. The following morning Captain Lovejoy gave Joe-John and the two sailors, Brown and Macready, the only rifle, and sent them down the coast, on foot, to reach Gray's Harbor, if possible, and bring help.

Not more than ten or fifteen minutes after the sailors had departed, those left on board heard the report of a gun. On account of the behavior of the Indians, they felt apprehensive. Although the Quiniault tribe of that coast was thought to be friendly enough, a wrecked vessel was likely to seem to them too attractive a prize to forego. Moreover, after the Indian war of 1855, certain "bad Indians" from the Snoqualmie and Nesqually tribes had joined the Quiniaults; and no longer ago than the preceding fall, Indians had fired on the crew of a trading vessel at Clearwater Bay.

Mantor grew so uneasy that, greatly against his wife's wishes, he took the double-barreled shotgun and went off to see what he could discover. He was gone so long that not only Mrs. Mantor, but Julia and Captain Lovejoy grew anxious. Their fears increased tenfold when they heard two distant shots in quick succession.

"Oh, they've murdered him!" Mrs. Mantor exclaimed; but Lovejoy felt sure that the reports were those of the shotgun that Uncle Ezra had taken—a surmise that was confirmed a few minutes later by the appearance of the old man, gun in hand. Closely pursued by two or three dogs, he was running with remarkable agility for one so old.

Dashing out of the woods on the farther bank of the little river, he started to cross over, leaping from one stone and stranded log to another. While he was floundering along, two arrows, shot from the thickets behind him, passed so close to his ears that he heard the soft *whish* of the shafts. Running to the side of the schooner, he was pulled up by the skipper, much out of breath and soaking wet.

Before he could say a word in explanation, several other arrows were discharged from the coverts across the stream, and describing high curves in the air, fell on the deck, and quivered spitefully in the planks.

"Get your pistol, Lovejoy!" Uncle Ezra shouted, as they dodged into shelter of the deck-house. "And bring me the ax, for I've lost the gun in the river."

Still panting heavily, the old man made known his fear that the sailors had been killed. A mile or more beyond the river, he had come in sight of five or six Indian cabins, near which several Indians seemed to be quarreling, apparently over the clothes of a white man.

While trying to gain a better view, he had been seen, and at once chased by the Indians and their dogs; when he had found that they were gaining on him, he had turned, and fired first one barrel of the shotgun and then the other, to stand them off.

The party prepared as best they could for defense. The only firearm they had was the skipper's pistol, an old-fashioned Colt's revolver. But they had axes aboard, and these they brought out where they could be used.

Mantor, who had great faith in boiling water, bade the frightened Chinaman keep a rousing fire and all his kettles steaming hot.

"If they try to board us, you catch up that long-handled scoop and dash scalding water in their faces!" the old man exclaimed to Julia. "You can do more with boiling water than with any other weapon."

What had led to the trouble between the Indians and the sailors they could only guess, but they concluded—rightly, as they afterward learned—that the sight of the stranded vessel had roused the cupidity of the savages. On that remote coast the Indians were wont to regard what the ocean casts ashore as their legitimate booty. Living among them at this time was a renegade white, escaped from the jail at Portland, Oregon, who may have incited them to kill the sailors in order to obtain what was in the vessel.

But no direct attack was made, although several times during the day Indians were seen spying about; and once a shot was fired from the woods across the river.

The next day passed in much the same manner, but the plight of those on board the wreck was growing worse every hour. They had food and water, but the deck was badly tilted upward and to one side. The outlook for relief was discouraging.

Several times that day the skipper spoke of starting off to get aid from the settlement at Neah Bay, about fifty miles up the coast. He thought that he might travel that distance in twenty-four hours; but Mantor dared not let him go, for he felt that he was needed to assist in defending the two women.

It was then that Julia resolved to start for Neah Bay herself.

"I am the youngest and strongest one here," she reasoned. "It is for me to go."

Knowing that Uncle Ezra would not permit her to

do so, she determined to set off secretly after dark, and leave a note for Mrs. Mantor. That afternoon she wrote the note, and when no one was observing her, wrapped up a little food and a drinking-cup in a handkerchief.

From what Captain Lovejoy had told her, she inferred that if she could only get away without being seen by the Indians, she could follow the coast-line up to Neah Bay. That there might be dangers from wolves, bears or prowling Indians she was well aware, but she felt that she must take the risk.

Having made her plans, she waited for darkness to set in. But help from another quarter was at hand. Ben Dunham had got back from the East a week before, and had immediately set off for Gray's Harbor and Shoalwater Bay with his tanks of seed-oysters and clams. He went by way of Olympia and the Chehalis River, and expected to meet Uncle Ezra and his party at Olympia.

Low water in the Chehalis River caused him to lose several days; and when he at last reached Gray's Harbor City, he learned that Mantor's schooner had sailed for Seattle two days before.

Then came on the storm. The anxiety that it gave him changed to gravest apprehension when late the following afternoon Joe-John and Brown reached the place, with tidings of the wreck and of an affray with the Indians, in which Macready had been killed and Brown shot in the hip with an arrow.

Night had fallen and the sea outside the bay was still far from placid, but Ben Dunham lost not a moment. Within an hour he had hired one of the large Indian canoes of those waters, capable of carrying twenty or thirty persons, with ten rowers, and accompanied by Joe-John, was on his way up the coast.

They had a hard night of it at sea, but the next day were able to use their sail, and just after sunset they pulled in at the little river-mouth where the

schooner lay beached. Had they been an hour later, Julia would have gone on her dangerous errand.

Julia was the first to see the canoe enter the cove. She called out to Uncle Ezra and the skipper—for at first she feared it was a party of Indians coming to attack the vessel. But almost immediately she discerned a familiar figure standing up in the bow, looking earnestly toward the wreck.

"That's Ben Dunham!" she cried to the others, and then hailed him with great joy.

Cheers rose from the canoe. It pulled close in where the schooner lay. With a shout, Ben Dunham climbed aboard. Joyful greetings followed. Aunt Rose Adelaide fell on his neck and kissed him; and when he turned to greet Julia, it is not to be wondered at that she felt her heart suddenly stir with something warmer than mere gratitude.

Uncle Ezra grasped the young man by both arms. "Young Jehu, it does me good to look at you! Sometimes I've thought 'twas safer to have you a good way off. But you can't be too near to suit us this time!"

They all went back to Gray's Harbor in the canoe the next day, and returned home by way of Olympia. They left the schooner on the gravel bank; and although Indians, or other wreckers, set fire to it, portions of the hull still remained as late as 1901.

It must be regretfully recorded, in conclusion, that owing to the many delays, the seed-bluepoints and little-neck clams failed to propagate at that time in Shoalwater Bay.

CHAPTER X

UNCLE Ezra's enthusiastic labors to build up the future State of Washington received about this time a rude shock. On the bright horizon of his hopes there rose an ugly black cloud.

A traveler, who wrote for Eastern magazines and newspapers under the name of "Veritas," began publishing satirical sketches that circulated from Maine to Texas. Under such titles as "A Canard Exploded," "A Burst Bubble," "A Boaster Bottled Up," and "The Real Truth about the Northwest," a succession of sarcastic articles and cartoons appeared that ridiculed the country and discredited those who were praising it, in general, and Uncle Ezra Mantor in particular. The writer declared that it rained three hundred and sixty-five days in the year, and that it was cloudy on the extra day in leap-year! He said that round Puget Sound the cost of clearing land was two hundred dollars an acre, and that when cleared the soil was good for nothing but hay and salmon-berries.

At these slanders Uncle Ezra only laughed. "Nobody will believe such lies!" he exclaimed. "I can easily stamp them out with facts about the climate, crops and fruits."

In vain the old man tried to find out who was thus defaming the new land of promise.

"Most likely it's some clique down in California that is jealous of our advantages," he said, "but facts will tell! Slanders can't stick to Puget Sound long!"

But when the weeks went by and the slanders continued to be published and to receive wider circulation, Uncle Ezra began to look grave and to lose heart.

"There is a noisy old boaster living somewhere up there in the woods, near that loudly crowing young rooster of a town they call Seattle, who would like to have us believe that all Washington Territory is one grand new Garden of Eden!

"'New Garden of Eden,' indeed! New Desert of Sahara would be nearer the facts. The plain truth of the matter, the truth which every one in the East ought to be told, is that three-quarters of all Washington Territory, and Oregon, too, in brief, that whole vast region east of the Cascade Range, is a rough, arid, wind-swept desert, where little or nothing can be made to grow in the way of crops or fruits. It is worse than the Sahara, for the Sahara is covered with harmless sand and gravel. But this Washington desert is the outpourings of an ancient volcano. Over thousands of square miles it is deeply buried under volcanic ash and scoria, about as fit for agriculture as the plains of Tartarus!" Thus opened one of the latest hostile newspaper articles.

Uncle Ezra knew that the climate *east* of the Cascades was dry, and he had doubts about the fertility of the soil there. How to meet this last attack truthfully troubled him. He was honest, and he would not put forth one word that he thought to be untrue.

The newly opened line of the Union Pacific Railway now spanned the continent. Early in the preceding winter Dunham, taking with him an exhibit of Puget Sound products, had gone to St. Louis, Chicago, and other cities of the middle West. He came home hot with indignation at what had been published, and was cherishing the resolve to seek out the author of the articles, thrash him first, and later sue him for damages. "I will cram his falsehoods down his throat!" he cried.

Julia and Uncle Ezra found it hard to persuade him to give up these warlike intentions.

"No, no, young Jehu, that wouldn't do a mite of

good now," the old lumberman said. "The mischief's done. This scamp's got the public ear, and a lie always has legs ten times longer than the truth!"

"But let me contradict it!"

"Ah, but that's the trouble, son. I don't know just what to say. The climate over there east of the Cascades *is* dry. No mistake about it. And as to the soil, I don't know just what it is. It can't be as bad as this rascal says, but I'm blessed if I know what it is."

"Couldn't we find out?" Julia asked. "Couldn't we get some of it and see what it's like?"

"Good idea!" exclaimed Ben Dunham. "I'll get some of it, and we will try it, right here in the garden!"

Uncle Ezra brightened up. "I never thought of that," he said. "Young heads are better than old ones—sometimes. We'll get some of that fellow's 'volcanic ashes and scoria,' and see what the stuff is like."

That necessitated a journey of two hundred miles or more, through Naches Pass, where as yet the road was little better than a trail. But four days later Ben Dunham was on his way, with three double wagons, six extra horses and five men.

He was gone thirteen weeks, visited the valleys of the Naches, Yakima, Entiat and Wenatchee rivers, and even reached the new village at Spokane Falls. Soil was what he was after, but he also made careful notes about the climate and the water-supply. He procured samples of the red, brown and gray soils from eighteen different river valleys, labeled them all carefully, and kept them separate. In all, he had more than a hundred bushels of these specimen soils when, in July, he came home.

The different earths were put in boxes, and seeds of all kinds were planted. The soil of eastern Washington vindicated itself at once. Water was all they

needed. The ridiculed "volcanic ashes" turned out to be rich earth that contained everything necessary to plant life.

Uncle Ezra Mantor was triumphant. New life entered the old man's heart. "Young Jehu," he cried to Ben Dunham, "people don't realize it yet, but you've done the finest stroke of business ever done in this territory so far! This autumn you shall take boxes of this brown soil and show the people in the East just what will grow in it. Seeing is believing. That shall be our answer to slanderers!"

There remained one point in doubt. Questions of the climate and the droughts east of the mountains were not yet answered. How was even a fertile soil to be watered if there was little rainfall?

Throughout the long journey Dunham had pondered the same problem. He took note of the rivers, the lakes and the mountain snows. There was water, but it ran to waste. The soil of nearly all the river valleys might be watered and made fertile if the water in the mountains could only be husbanded and conducted down to it. But how?

Artificial irrigation of farms and ranches was a new idea then in the United States; but young Dunham, while on this trip to collect sample soils, weighed it carefully, with the result that he returned to Seattle full of a great new project for converting all eastern Washington into a prosperous land. How prophetic a vision was his the abounding orchards and croplands of the Yakima, Wenatchee, Spokane and Palouse valleys now bear ample witness.

Uncle Ezra found it hard at first to have faith in so novel a scheme of cultivation. Dunham, however, continued to uphold it, and Julia became his first convert.

Meanwhile, they were making up an exhibit of the vegetables and plants grown in the boxes of volcanic ashes. Before setting off on the proposed tour of

vindication, Dunham made a trip to Salt Lake City, to study what had been done there in the way of irrigation by the Mormon settlers.

The Territory of Washington was about to choose a delegate to Congress. Two candidates were seeking nomination. Owing to the rapid growth of the new territory, conflicting interests had of late led to discord. At a political convention held at Seattle, it became apparent that neither of the proposed candidates was really acceptable to the people.

Uncle Ezra Mantor, who was present at the convention and took an active part in the proceedings, saw how matters were going, and decided to put forward a new candidate. In a speech full of quaint humor, he presented the name of Benjamin F. Dunham.

Ben Dunham and his work had become well known at Seattle and throughout the territory. People liked what he was doing; they liked particularly this last journey of his in defense of the reputation of the territory. There was hearty applause as soon as his name was mentioned, and it became evident that he would prove a popular candidate.

Nevertheless, the opposition on the part of the disappointed aspirants for the office was violent, and immediately grew abusive. Ben Dunham came home from his study of irrigation at Salt Lake City, not only to find himself nominated as delegate to Congress, but to learn that he was already a much-abused man. When he read what the opposition was saying of him in the newspapers his temper flamed.

"Just wait till they hear from me!" he shouted. "Just wait till I start after those fellows! I'll soon have their hides nailed up on the barn door!"

Uncle Ezra, Aunt Rose Adelaide and Julia exchanged glances of dismay. They knew only too well to what lengths he was capable of going. He was almost certain to be betrayed into extravagant lan-

guage or violent acts that would cost him the confidence of the public.

"Son," said Uncle Ezra, seriously, "don't you read another word of that stuff. Don't look at another newspaper, and don't write anything. Go straight about your own business. Take your exhibit of soils and fruits, and go on your trip East, just as if nothing had happened."

"What! Leave all these falsehoods uncontradicted behind me!" Ben Dunham cried.

That evening Mercer called at the garden, with Henrietta, to congratulate Ben on his nomination. When they saw the temper he was in, they agreed with Uncle Ezra and Julia. Mercer good-humoredly counseled him to do as the old lumberman advised.

"That would be cowardly!" cried Ben Dunham. "I must set myself right."

Mercer laughed. "I'm afraid, Dunham, you will set yourself wrong instead of right."

But Ben Dunham did not agree with him in the least. However, after the callers had gone, Julia found an opportunity to exert her influence over him. At heart he had trusted in her judgment from the first. With all his rashness, he seemed to know, instinctively, that she was a safe counselor and his good genius. But it was only after long and earnest conversation that she won a promise from him to follow Uncle Ezra's advice.

Two days later he set off,—still a little reluctantly,—and left the political pot to boil. After he had gone, and when the campaign was at its height, Uncle Ezra and Julia, putting their heads together, prepared the following letter, which appeared a few days later in every newspaper in the territory:

Much has been said about the merits of the rival candidates for the office of delegate from this territory to Congress. A good deal of hard talk has been indulged in; but voters will take notice that it has all come from

one side. Benjamin Dunham has not said anything. Mr. Dunham thinks the voters know whom they want for delegate, and is willing to leave it to them. He has gone about his business, and has not even taken the trouble to contradict the falsehoods that have been circulated about him.

"But what has he ever done?" his opponents ask. "What claim has he on the people of Washington Territory?"

We can answer that question. He has brought thousands of fruit-trees here from California, Oregon and the East, and has shown that they will flourish in our climate. He has started profitable hop-fields about Puget Sound. He has brought seed-oysters and other shell-fish from the Atlantic. He has introduced all kinds of small fruits for our gardens. He has delivered public lectures in many of the Eastern states, setting forth better than any other man has done the opportunities and the advantages that the Northwest has to offer to emigrants and capitalists.

More recently, when envious writers maligned Washington Territory, Benjamin Dunham refuted the calumny and exposed the slanderers. It was Dunham who drove six hundred miles to obtain samples of the soil of our territory east of the Cascades, to see whether it was good soil or not; and now it is Dunham who is on his way East with sample boxes of these soils and what grew in them, to prove to the people of the Atlantic States that no better soil can be found anywhere.

Mr. Dunham has done and is doing all this at his own private expense. He has never asked for a dollar from the public treasury.

Now it is for the voters to say whether they want a man of this stamp as delegate, or whether they want politicians who, so far as we can learn, have never done anything but blow their own horns and live at public expense.

The letter had its effect. Ben Dunham was chosen delegate by a large majority. On his return from St. Louis, three weeks later, he found himself a popular favorite.

That he was a good deal elated by the honor accorded him goes without saying. He had always loved public favor and public life. He began outlining the great speeches he would make at the national capital—and again Uncle Ezra and Julia grew anxious.

"Girl, you will have to go with him, to put on the brakes!" the old lumberman exclaimed. "He's a fine fellow, and the greatest hand to push things along that I ever saw, but if he gets drawn into a big debate over there in Congress, there's no saying what he may do!"

"Yes, Julia dear, the call has come for you, this time," Aunt Rose Adelaide said, rather sorrowfully. "You will have to leave us."

That, indeed, was what Ben Dunham himself was now ardently pleading for. He triumphed. One month later there was a wedding in the new Garden of Eden, with Henrietta and Elizabeth as bridesmaids, and Mercer as best man. On the day of the wedding, Uncle Ezra Mantor and his Rose Adelaide virtually adopted Julia and Ben Dunham as the children of their household.

The young people made their wedding-tour by way of the new Pacific railway to the national capital.

The after life and civic career of the Hon. Benjamin Dunham, not only at the national capital, but in Seattle, are matters of current history. The extraordinary growth of the city and of the new state rendered him wealthy, almost in spite of himself.

In her beautiful home, overlooking both the sound and Lake Washington, with Mount Rainier in the distance, I met Julia again, last summer, for the first time in more than forty years.

I met Julia's four sons, Mantor,—named for Uncle Ezra,—Sylvester, Mercer and "young Ben," as they

call him, all splendid young fellows, now just entering on that great promising arena of Northwestern life. With young Ben I made a trip over to the great Olympic forests, beyond the sound, among the elk and the silvertips.

But Ben Dunham himself I had come too late to meet. "He was too hard a worker to live to be old," Julia said to me, sadly.

Uncle Ezra and his dear, brisk little Rose Adelaide had also died many years ago.

"What became of Henrietta and Elizabeth?" I asked.

"Oh, Elizabeth married, and married well," Julia replied. "All the girls who came out with us married, all except Henrietta, dear soul. She alone held fast to her ambition to be a teacher, and in time became an instructor in the university here."

"And Mercer, the prime mover of it all, what of him?" I asked.

"I never think of Mr. Mercer without a feeling of gratitude and a sense of regret," Julia said. "He undertook so much for us, risked so much, and lost so much. I have always felt that a proper return was never made, never could be made him for what he did. That voyage nearly ruined him, financially, at least. Many there were, too, who blamed him for undertaking it. Mercer was a young man of great ideas, and, like many another, suffered in attempting to carry them out. A man of large ideals he has always remained. It was due to Mercer more than to any one else that, in 1893, the Northwest was properly represented at the World's Columbian Exposition at Chicago.

"At present he is a successful ranchman in Wyoming," Julia continued. "That fact, however, is far from describing him or portraying his real life and character. I always think of him as a genius and a man of high ideals."

"And the old *Continental* that brought you so far, what became of that?"

"For a number of years it plied as a passenger steamship between San Francisco and Seattle. Often when it came in, I used to go down to the docks and go aboard, it seemed so much like home to me. Afterward it made coastwise voyages southward to Mexican and Central American ports, and was finally wrecked in the Gulf of California."

THE END.